TW-04

TACTICAL WISDOM

SCOUTING AND PATROLLING

JOE DOLIO

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AND

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Tactical Wisdom

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TACTICAL WISDOM SERIES

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Bible References are from the NIV, unless otherwise noted.

Preface

Joshua, the son of Nun, sent two men secretly as spies, saying. "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

Joshua 2:1a

Imagine a world without the instantaneous information warehouse that you carry in your hand today. Without the ability to know what is going on locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally in seconds with the touch of a button. A world where if you want to know what is happening downtown, you'll have to go and look for yourself.

This is the Without Rule of Law world we quickly find ourselves hurtling towards at full speed. World tensions and the socio-political environment mean that conflict is more likely than not in the near term, and that conflict will involve the destruction or degradation of the electrical grid and international networks. We don't have to like it, we just have to know that it's possible, and indeed probable.

In this environment, we can't just withdraw into our bug out location or bug-in location, shut out the world, and hope to be left alone. That's a strategy for failure and nothing good will come of it.

In Volume 1, the Base Line Training Manual, we discussed the basic skills and gear everyone needs to survive, along with how to organize and train your group. Next, in Volume 2, Fieldcraft, we learned the basic skills to move and survive, and camp securely in a hostile environment. After that, in Volume 3, Defensive Operations, we learned how to defend our main location from any hostile force that came to our gates and how to conduct local security operations.

In this volume, we will discuss how to conduct a coordinated campaign to gather information and deal with threats as far away from us as we can. I'd rather handle a hostile force 5 miles out, than on my perimeter.

We do this by developing Scouting and Patrolling skills. The idea for this manual comes from my time in the US Marine Corps where they have a

manual titled “Scouting and Patrolling for Infantry Units” which is geared toward the small unit. They update it every few years, and while it still contains solid individual skills, like everything else, it’s become technology dependent (GPS) and the drills and procedures rely on having the massive logistical tail of the US Military. For example, when you and I encounter a large opposing force while scouting, we can’t just call in artillery or an airstrike. We can’t just set up a strongpoint and wait for a relief column.

I decided, after considering those factors, to break down the scouting and patrolling skills of US forces, Commonwealth (UK/AUS/CAN) forces, and other NATO forces into skills and drills that a civilian self-defense group can execute, without a large logistical tail or outside support.

Before we do that, let’s discuss the history of Scouting & Patrolling in Western Military forces.

In the US, the first dedicated manual was written during World War 2 by Col. Rex Applegate. Prior to World War 2, wars were fought by large units massing on the field and charging each other. Towards the end of World War 1, the German forces began to focus on squad and platoon sized patrols to find weaknesses in enemy front lines. The Japanese, on the other hand, focused primarily on patrolling in squad sized elements to find openings to exploit and then massing at that point.

As the US had no experience, a crash training program began with Col. Applegate leading the way. During the time it was being developed, US Marine Corps General A.A. Vandegrift, facing the Japanese while stranded on Guadalcanal, made a statement that has shaped US doctrine ever since:

My message to the troops…in training for this type of warfare is to go back to the tactics of the French and Indian days. This is not meant facetiously. Study their tactics and fit in our modern weapons, and you have a solution. I refer to the tactics and leadership of the days of ROGER’S RANGERS.

General Alexander Archer Vandegrift, USMC

Gen. Vandegrift, who later went on to be the first 4-Star General to be Commandant of the Marine Corps, also founded the Scout/Sniper programs that are now so integral to the USMC. His quote here also led to the re-establishment of the Rangers in the US Army.

When Gen. Vandegrift created the Scout/Sniper program, he instructed his subordinate commanders to seek out the hunters and outdoorsmen among their units. These men already had the critical movement and scouting skills down, they just needed to add the reconnaissance element and military reporting.

As always, what is old is new again. During the Global War On Terror (GWOT), the USMC, after decades of preparing for a peer-level fight with the highly mechanized Soviets that never came, found itself in the same position that it did in 1942. A Marine expeditionary force was fighting an elusive enemy who fought in the old ways of ambushes and sniping, not the high-tech new ways of mobile armored tank battles. Gen. Mattis in Nasiriyah found himself in the exact same position that Gen. Vandegrift was in on Guadalcanal. Again, the USMC went to hunters and outdoorsman and created the new Combat Hunter program.

From the Commonwealth perspective, the transition from large-scale set piece battle began with a young Captain in the British Army during the First Boer War. Captain Robert Baden-Powell and his company faced the Boers, who refused to stand up in the orderly lines and fighting order that were common in that time. The Boers relied on patrolling, scouting, and ambushes, refusing to offer a good target for massed fires and decisive engagements.

After the First Boer War and in the lead up to the Second Boer War, in 1891, young Captain Baden-Powell wrote “Reconnaissance and Scouting”, meant as a guide for British Forces in South Africa, to fight the Boers. As we discussed in TW-02, Fieldcraft, Baden-Powell’s experiences in the Second Boer War motivated him to create the Boy Scout movement, teaching outdoors and scouting skills to young men.

In our role as civilians interested in preparedness and defending our group or local area, we will have to use these same skills. We won’t have the ability to call in airstrikes, to dig in and wait for additional forces, or call our on-call artillery team to get us out of trouble. We need to break down our training into the skills of the Boer War and the French & Indian War, in order to survive.

In this volume, we will discuss patrol organization, basic patrol tactics, individual day and night scouting skills, advanced (yet low-tech) land navigation, types of patrols, and other skills related to scouting and patrolling. We will remove all the doctrinal “big-military” topics from most similar manuals like writing operations orders and the like. We want to focus on what you can use, not what you can’t.

Let’s begin by discussing why these skills are important. In a WROL situation, you can’t just call for help and have the police arrive in under 20 minutes. You will have to handle whatever comes your way. By actively running a Scouting and Patrolling program, you will have a better picture of what is happening around you.

Whether you envision protecting your site from looters and raiders, an invading hostile force, or even that entirely hypothetical resistance to an increasingly tyrannical government, these skills can help keep you safe, and keep the fight away from your doorstep.

If done WELL, it can keep the fight from ever happening. As an example, let’s say your patrols identify a group traveling towards your site. You could then decide to place an obstacle along their route to turn them away from your site and prevent any confrontation at all.

If we must fight, we can make the route to our site so deadly and dangerous for any attackers, that they decide to go and look for an easier target elsewhere.

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Chapter 1

Intro to Patrol Operations

When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.
Deuteronomy 20:1

Our hope in a Without Rule of Law situation is that we can live in peace, and go about our business of producing food, procuring water, and engaging in commerce with our neighbors without harassment. We'd like to do that without worrying about other groups who might not share our desire for peace, or criminal gangs, or even petty tyrants taking advantage of the situation.

The cold, hard truth is that history teaches us that a WROL situation will be nothing at all like that. There will be bands of people taking advantage of the situation and the lack of law and order to benefit themselves. Hungry people will make rash decisions. Underlying tensions and hatreds will be unleashed. Petty disputes will be seen as a reason for action.

Whatever law enforcement that still exists will revert to a glorified security service, protecting government facilities and "critical infrastructure", and largely ineffectual at even that. This will allow criminal elements the freedom to act without fear of arrest. If you somehow think that these elements will suddenly become law abiding, I've got bad news…they won't. They have one set of skills, taking things from others., that they will rely on.

Throw into this mix that age-old super-villain called "government" and you've got a lot to deal with. A government that is functioning on a limited basis during an emergency relies on two things:

1. Your dependence on them to quell any hopes of resistance.
2. Brute force under color of law.

As an example, the federal government advises people to maintain 14 days of food and water, and after that, they say that the Federal Emergency Management Agency will be around to hand out food and water. If you rely on that, you are dependent on them. If they really were interested in reducing dependency, the agency would be called the Federal Emergency RESOLUTION Agency. Management implies on-going.

Regarding the brute force comment, the Defense Production Act enables the government to force companies (including farms) to produce what they demand at the price they demand, or risk arrest. The same goes for you, because they can declare you a “Hoarder” under federal law and seize all of the food and supplies (“designated scarce materials”) that you have.

You might think, if there is still government functioning in some way, is it really a WROL situation? I first direct you to Hurricane Katrina. The other thing I’d like to point out is The United Mexican States (Yes, that is the official name – Estados Unidos Mexicanos). They have a full federal government, which controls exactly nothing outside of federal facilities that look like a Forward Operating Base in Afghanistan or Iraq. The nation is effectively ruled by roving, armed criminal gangs. In fact, in October of 2019, when cartel leader Ovidio Guzmán was arrested, the cartel attacked a city in Sinaloa, and after a day-long battle, the Mexican government effectively surrendered and released Guzmán and withdrew from cartel territory.

In a true WROL situation, it’s best to avoid any type of central government outside of your immediate area.

But, with all of these disparate groups out there, what can we do? How can we determine who is in our immediate area, and then, what can we do about them to reduce the risk?

The answer lies in Scouting and Patrolling. We have to get out away from our home location, whether it’s a compound, a cabin, a camp, or our house, we can’t just sit inside and hope no one comes…because they WILL come. With violent and armed groups out and about, it is far too dangerous to sit and wait for them to come to you. We must leave our base of operations, and go see who is out moving, who is camped where, and observe what everyone else is up to.

This is called reconnaissance patrolling or scouting.

Once we’ve determined who is out there and decided that they are definitely a threat and definitely harming others, we have to decide how to deal with them. I think we can all agree that it is far better to deal with them a long way from our perimeter rather than right outside our fence line.

When we decide to either destroy the group in a surprise attack or convince them to leave by a series of ambushes, this is called combat patrolling. Let’s be realists here: dealing decisively with armed, hostile groups in a WROL

situation is for the common good. Hoping and praying that they will leave you alone and go harm someone else is NOT what morality calls us to do. Every single group in a WROL situation needs an effective patrolling program. These patrols are distinct from the interior guard patrols and local security patrols we discussed in TW-03, Defensive Operations. These range farther out.

What is patrolling?

According to the Canadian Forces manual "Patrolling":

> A patrol is a detachment sent out from a unit to perform an assigned mission of reconnaissance or combat or a combination of both. Patrols will vary in size from as little as three personnel, up to a company in strength. Patrolling is carried out by day and by night, in all types of operations.
>
> *Canada Land Forces Manual, Patrolling (B-GL-392-004)*

According to US Doctrine, a patrol is a detachment sent out for the purpose of gathering information or carrying out a destructive, harassing, mopping-up, or security mission (US DOD Joint Publication 1-02).

So, for our purposes, it's a group sent out to gather information (scouting/recon patrols) or to harass or destroy hostile groups (combat patrols).

As a reminder, we are talking about a full "Without Rule of Law" situation here. Grid down or inconsistent, no services, no government to speak of. The common law principles of community protection and community self-defense apply.

No matter what type of patrol we are conducting, the personnel on that patrol rely on scouting skills to be effective. The two are intertwined. In this volume, we will cover those skills.

Patrol Planning

A lot goes into patrol planning, and the various military manuals on it will make your eyes gloss over, so for our purposes, as a civilian local self-defense group, we're going to simplify the process. We're not going to bore you with all of the inputs and process that military units use, because, quite frankly, you won't have the same resources.

The first resource you'll use to plan patrol operations is a map and your knowledge of the local area. Decide what are the "Avenues of Approach" into your general area like high-speed routes (highways), rivers, railways,

power line rights-of-way, and similar things. These will need to be watched or at least checked on regularly.

You'll also want to analyze your map for "Key Terrain", like bridges, high hills, major intersections, and the like, to establish observation posts or to include in your scouting and patrolling plan.

Once you've begun gathering information from other patrols, checkpoints, radio monitoring, and talking to other local groups, you will find other areas that will need to be checked out by patrols like areas where refugee movement is reported, areas where attacks have occurred, areas where people have seen campfires at night, and other reports of a similar fashion.

Using all this information, you will need to plan patrol routes that cover as many as possible. You will also need to send out patrols to check things on short notice, like when someone reports a group moving along a particular avenue of approach.

For our purposes, sending out hunting parties should be considered as a type of patrol, because they will use the same skills, and may need to instantly transition to being a recon or combat patrol if they come across a threat while out hunting. For example, a three-man hunting party comes across a previously unknown camp site. They will need to immediately report it by radio, and then establish an observation post to watch the camp and determine who is using it.

If that observation then leads to, for example, seeing that a man has a woman tied up and held against her will, immediate action would be called for to free her, and then return to your perimeter. Would you just leave her there, as a hostage? I think not.

This might seem like a far-fetched example, but I assure you it is consistent with scenes found in WROL situations throughout the world, including previously modern and advanced areas. Humans will regress to a medieval existence almost immediately.

Having an active and aggressive scouting and patrolling program will enhance your security and safety.

Every patrol you send out should specific objectives like: "Check the intersection of Route 50 and East Lake Rd" or "Investigate area of power line on east side of Smalltown". Be specific about the objective, but let the patrol decide on its own method and route.

Organizing Patrols

Organizing patrols for our civilian self-defense organization is different than organizing military patrols because we won't have the same manpower or specialized teams like machine gun teams, artillery forward observers, and so on. We have to make do with what we have.

The most basic building block is the "buddy pair" concept we've discussed in previous volumes. These are two people partnered together for operations in the field. If it can be avoided, they should not be husband-and-wife or any type of romantic partners, for two reasons. One, they would be distracted by each other from the task at hand. Second, they would take unnecessary risks to protect each other, putting the larger group at risk.

Buddy pairs operate together. If one is covering in one direction, the other covers the opposite. During dynamic operations, if one is moving, the other is covering. If one is sleeping in a patrol base, the other is standing watch.

Expanding on that, if we put two buddy pairs together, we have a fire team. A fire team is the normal patrolling element for our organizations. It's the best for scouting and recon. Combat patrols will require more. One person is designated as the fire team leader and one person in the second pair is designated as the assistant fire team leader.

On a team level, the two buddy pairs operate as a buddy pair themselves. By that we mean that one pair covers while the other pair moves, and so on.

For combat patrols, we may need a larger group, which military units call a squad. For our purposes, we will call a squad two fire teams, which is the same as a US Army squad or a British/Canadian/Australian Army section. The US Marine Corps uses three fire teams for a squad, but we most likely won't have that many people out operating at once.

These are just suggestions; if you can only field six people instead of eight, that's fine, but run them as one squad of three buddy pairs, rather than two groups of three. It's easier to instinctively operate as a pair, rather than a trio.

For leadership, the most qualified fire team leader becomes the squad leader, and the other fire team leader is his assistant squad leader. We aren't naming these positions to become a militia or assign extra duties, like a military would, we are doing it because when things get tough, someone has to be in charge and everyone else has to follow orders. There is no democracy in the field.

For advanced operations, like a large ambush or a raid, two squads operating together become a platoon and you will need to appoint one of the

squad leaders as a platoon leader. It's simple to adapt and we're over-simplifying the complex military model to make it easy for us.

Patrol Roles

Taking the concept back down to the fire team model, since it is our most common patrolling or scouting tool, we need to build them a certain way to have all the skills we need in one scout section/fire team.

One person should be the designated "scout". This should be your person who is the best at land navigation and quiet movement. Their role would be to move first, keeping the team on their route, and looking ahead for danger.

The team will need a radio operator. This person's job is to communicate back to the base of operations and with other groups operating, as well as monitoring other communications assets, like a "close-call" type scanner. Radio operators are also best to use as the team recorder because they're already writing things down to be communicated back.

The team will need a second scout. This person is the second-best scout and will relieve the lead scout but will normally cover the rear. They will also keep track of distance covered (pace count). If you have a designated medic, this is a good role for them.

Finally, the team will need a team leader, who will be responsible for backing up the scout's navigation and leading the team. They will make all decisions on the patrol.

Every member should be fully qualified to treat any injuries on themselves or others.

Once two teams begin operating together as a squad, one radio operator will be the senior operator and the other the assistant. They will split up communications duties between them.

The squad should also have one person designated as the medic. While they should have better medical skills and carry a little extra gear, they don’t have to be a paramedic or doctor. As long as they can treat, or lead treatment of others is good enough.

These aren’t rigid roles, but we should develop people to excel in their assigned area and then begin cross-training everyone to be able to perform in whatever role they choose.

Patrol Preparation

Every person going out on a patrol need their full belt kit and their Patrol/EDC bag, as outlined in TW-01, Baseline Training Manual. In order to ensure completeness, let's review what the bare minimum is here.

Belt Kit

1. Some type of load bearing belt with or without suspenders, with a way of attaching gear to it.
2. Some way of carrying 32-64 ounces of water (1 or 2 canteens).
3. Holster and spare magazines for a personal sidearm.
4. Fixed blade knife, preferably a bayonet.
5. A quality first aid kit on your belt that you can reach with either hand (all members carry in same place).
6. Optional: some type of butt-pack for miscellaneous gear (my butt-pack holds my first aid kit).

As a reminder, this belt kit should be something you wear at all times during a WROL situation.

Patrol/EDC Bag

1. Weapons cleaning kit.
2. First Aid Kit (yes, another one).
3. Food: Enough food for 48-72 hours, no matter how long you plan to be on patrol.
4. Method of heating food: Could be a stove or MRE heaters.
5. Gloves/Hat (year-round).
6. Camouflage mask and face paint – it will need to be re-applied.
7. Signal Kit: Mirror or whistle.
8. Shelter: Either a poncho or tarp.
9. Sleep System: Some type of small, compact sleeping system.
10. Spare socks/undergarments.
11. Rain gear.
12. Observation Gear: Binoculars, writing materials, etc.
13. Fixed Blade Knife: Yes, another one.

In addition to these things, each member should have a small UHF/VHF team radio, set to low power to communicate within their own team. Each person should also have a compass, some method of purifying water when replenishing your supplies, and a watch. Some type of survival kit should be on each person as well.

The team radio operator will need an additional radio for communicating back to your base of operations or with other teams in the field. Either a handset set to high power or some type of more powerful manpack radio is needed for this.

A good idea to take along for patrolling is some type of radio scanner with a "close call" feature. Essentially, your radio operator will put an earpiece from the scanner radio in and set it to use its close call feature. This means that the scanner will listen for any radio signals at all within about a 300–500-meter radius. Trust me, in a WROL situation, you will want to know immediately if anyone is using a radio that close to you. It can keep you from walking into an ambush or blundering into an opposing force.

This is the same reason that we will use radio discipline and talk as little as necessary on them.

Your team leader will need a paper map and notebook as well for completing his patrol report. A patrol report is exactly what it sounds like, a narrative description of everything that happened on the patrol, where it went, what it saw, etc. Keeping notes as you go makes compiling it easier.

Handheld GPS units can be used to SUPPLEMENT maps and compasses, but they are NOT a replacement for them.

Successful patrol operations begin with successful organization and gear.

Training Standard

- Be able to describe what a patrol is.
- Explain how to plan patrols.
- Explain how patrols are organized.
- Describe the various roles in a patrol.
- Explain what gear is needed to conduct a patrol, both on your belt and in your Patrol/EDC bag.
- List what additional items are needed to conduct a patrol.
- Describe how to compile a patrol report.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 2

Patrol Movement

Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:12

Before getting into how to conduct specific types of patrols and what scouting skills are required, we first must learn how to move together as team. The verse above gives us great guidance; in order to defend ourselves, we need to move in the most mutually supporting way possible.

We're going to discuss several foot movement formations for a fire team or a squad to use while scouting. Most of these come from US Marine Corps doctrine, but we will add in a few from the South Africans, the Rhodesians, and the Australians, as they have very relevant experience conducting scouting operations in areas that were pretty lawless.

Once you have the basic formations down, train with your team on switching between formations smoothly. You'll know you have it down well when you begin to "flow" from one to the other smoothly. I talk a lot about repetition, and this is where doing hundreds of repetitions comes into play. At Recruit Field Training Duty, Marines spend an entire week on these formations, all day and night, and learning how to transition between them. It's that important, so spend the time. It's not as high-speed as doing the cool-guy stuff, but the best operators in the world simply master the basics.

We aren't going to be as concerned with where specific roles are in these formations, except to note that your scout should be in front, and your team leader should be where he can best control his team. As we discuss each formation, we'll hit the pros and cons of each and how they can be used. These formations will give you the flexibility to adjust your movement formation to the environment and mission you are on. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Generally, open your formation up in open territory and close it up when you enter restrictive terrain. Nighttime, when you can't see each as well, is a good time to close up your formation as well.

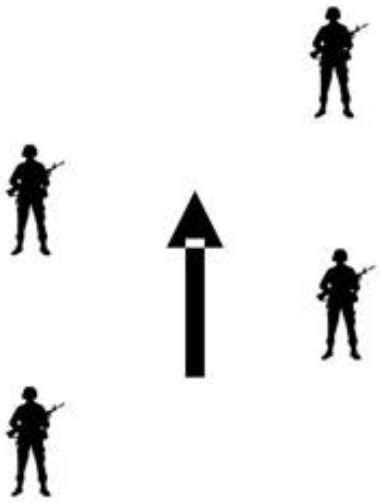
Over the next several pages, we will discuss fire team formations, and then squad formations. You don't have to use the same formation for your fire

teams that you use for your squad. Mix and match them to match the task at hand.

It’s worth repeating: Train on moving as a team. Train on transitioning between formations seamlessly, quietly, and safely. Only through constant repetition can you master these techniques.

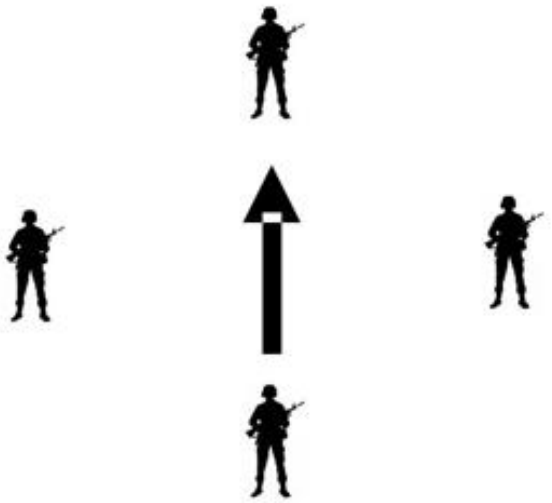
These are in addition to the 3 formations in TW-02, Fieldcraft (File, Line, and Column).

FIRE TEAM COLUMN



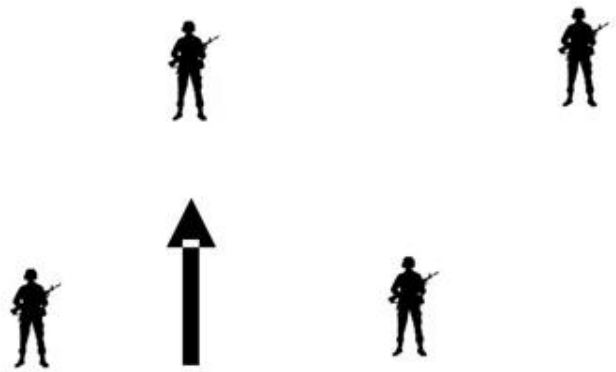
- This formation allows you to have quick and very controlled movement.
- The Team Leader should be in the second position.
- Provides the best fire to the flanks.
- Provides limited fire to the front and is vulnerable from the front.

FIRE TEAM WEDGE

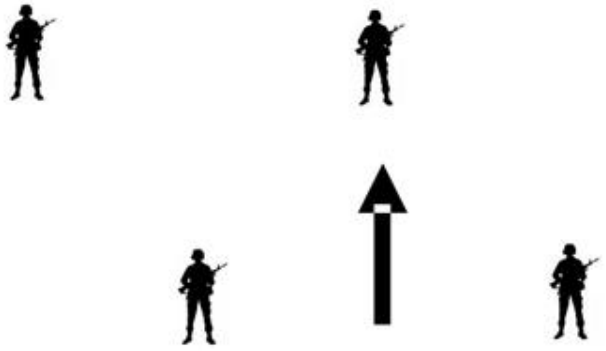


- Best all-around formation and very flexible.
- This formation allows solid control of the formation.
- The Team Leader can place himself on either side in the middle section; whichever is best for overall control.
- This formation gives good fire in all direction.
- Note: The US Army calls this a “diamond” and their wedge has one member off to the left or right. It’s essentially the same formation, so we are combining them.

FIRE TEAM SKIRMISHERS LEFT

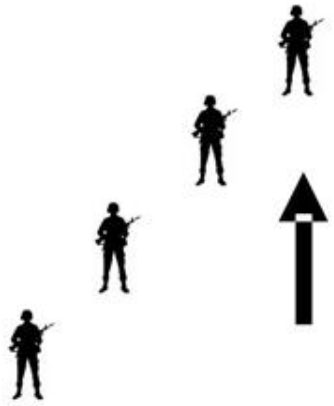


FIRE TEAM SKIRMISHERS RIGHT

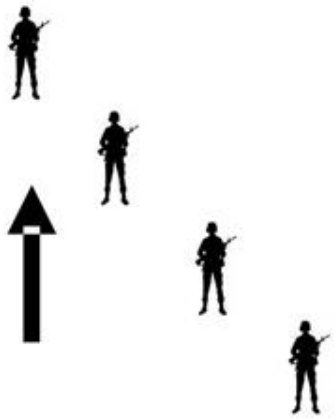


- This formation provides the best fire to the front.
- Use this when you know where the opposition is and how strong they are.
- The Team Leader is in the back row, between the two in front.

FIRE TEAM ECHELON LEFT



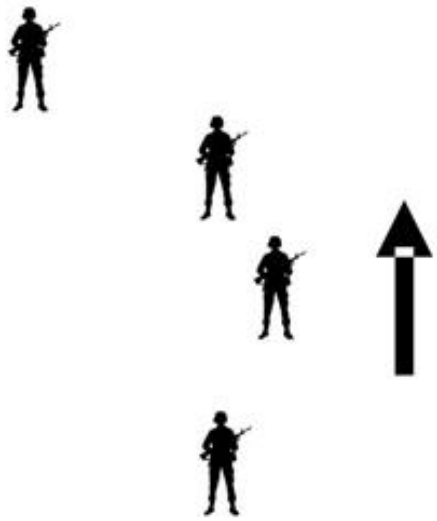
FIRE TEAM ECHELON RIGHT



- The Team Leader is the second person in the formation.
- This formation provides fire to the front and to the echeloned flank.
- Use this formation to protect a flank of a larger group.

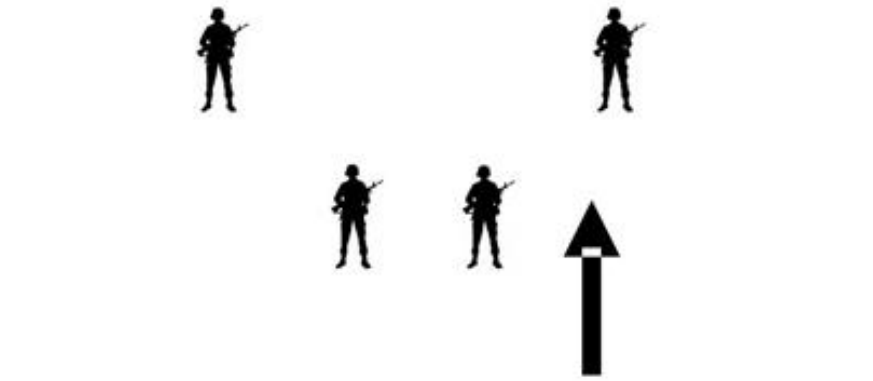
- This formation is used for tracking operations.
- The two in front are security.
- The person in the middle is the lead tracker.
- The person at the rear is the Team Leader.
- This formation allows the tracker to work while others provide security.

FIRE TEAM HALF-Y



- This is another tracking formation, used when the terrain is restrictive on one side.
- The front person is security, as is the rear person.
- The lead tracker is second.
- The Team Leader is third in the formation.

FIRE TEAM V



- This formation provides good all-around security and allows fire in all directions.
- The V is used in open terrain.
- The Team Leader is in either position in the rear row.
- This formation is very flexible.

When considering the larger formation of a squad, you can simply run the two teams in a column in their own formations, bring them up online (side-by-side), or echelon them to the left or right like you see in the fire team formations. The USMC has some other squad formations, but they are based on 3 fire team squads; we won't really have the manpower for that. There are three movement techniques that a squad can use:

1. Traveling: One fire team follows the other at a standard distance between teams (15-20 meters).
2. Traveling Overwatch: Fire teams extend distance to 30-50 meters between teams, allowing the second team to overwatch the first.
3. Bounding Overwatch: One fire team remains in covered and concealed position, overwatching the route. The second team "bounds" forward quickly to a covered and concealed position. The first team then bounds past the second.

Movement Techniques

MOVEMENT FORMATION	WHEN NORMALLY USED	CHARACTERISTICS			
		CONTROL	DISPERSION	SPEED	SECURITY
Traveling	Contact not likely	More	Less	Fastest	Least
Traveling Over-watch	Contact possible	Less	More	Slower	More
Bounding Over-watch	Contact expected	Most	Most	Slowest	Most

Training Standard

- Demonstrate the following team formations:
    - Column
    - Wedge
    - Skirmishers Right
    - Skirmishers Left
    - Echelon Right
    - Echelon Left
    - Y
    - Half Y
    - V
- Describe the following squad movement techniques:
    - Traveling
    - Traveling Overwatch
    - Bounding Overwatch

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 3

Basic Squad Tactics

Proclaim this among the nations:
Prepare for war!
Rouse the warriors!
Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.
Joel 3:9

As always, our goal is survival and, to that end, we will be avoiding contact, rather than engaging in combat. The sad reality of WROL life is that avoiding conflict will not always be possible. Some hostile contact is inevitable, and we must train to be able to respond to it decisively.

Just as we train to treat wounds and injuries that we hope we never get; we must train to fight battles we hope will never come. Being able to effectively respond to contact doesn't mean we are out looking for it. We could be conducting a patrol and fall victim to an ambush. We could stumble upon a hostile group's camp site unexpectedly and need to be able to react quickly and decisively.

In this chapter, we will learn the basics of fire and movement, how to seize an objective, and how to respond to chance contact, or what we call "Immediate Actions Drills". These are automatic responses that your team should just take without waiting for an order.

Fire & Movement

The most basic element of squad or patrol tactics is the concept of fire and movement. Essentially, one element fires while the other element moves. While moving forward or breaking contact, once the moving element has moved a certain distance ("I'm up, he sees me, I'm down"), they take the best available cover and concealment, and then they become the fire element while the other element becomes the moving element.

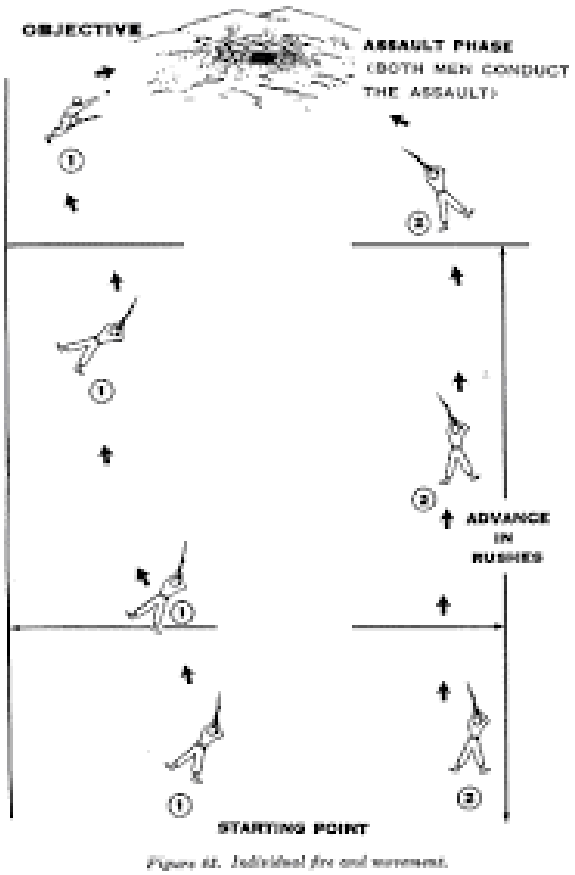
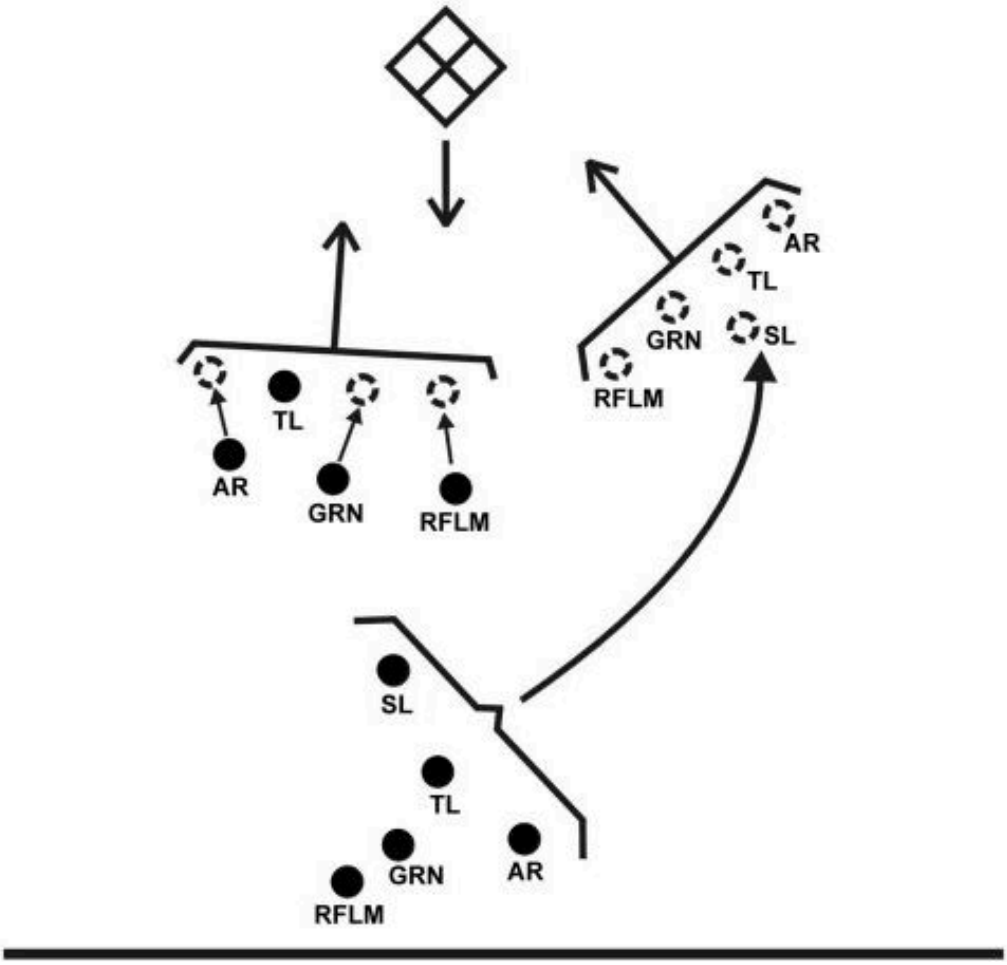


Figure 12. Individual fire and movement.

Source: US Army

The US Army graphic above shows a two-person buddy pair, but the concept is the same with two buddy pairs in one fire team, or two fire teams in one squad, and so on. Essentially, one element provides covering fire, and the second element moves.

In the squad attack, one team becomes the fire support element, maintaining fire on the target, while the second team moves to what we called the "flank", or the side of the hostile target. Once the second team, called the "assault" element, gets into position, they notify the fire support element by radio, who then shifts their fire to other targets to avoid hitting their sister team or stops firing, as the assault team then "assaults" the objective.



Source: US Army

The basic premise is the enemy will be too busy taking cover from the fire support element, that they won't see the assault element moving into position.

Once the assault element is in position, however, how do we assault an objective? While combat isn't our main objective, we had better know how to do this effectively, just in case. We have two options that come to us from the Commonwealth Forces (British/Canadian/ANZAC):

1. Fight Through: The assaulting teams go into the Skirmishers formation and then each buddy pair uses fire and movement to move across the objective. In each pair, one moves while the other covers, then they switch until they cross the objective to the "Limit of Advance" (see below).
2. Assault Through: The assaulting team or teams form a Line formation, completely abreast and walk across the objective to

the “Limit of Advance”, keeping abreast and engaging any targets they encounter along the way.

The “Limit of Advance” or LOA, is the far side of the objective, beyond which our teams should not go. In order to keep control of our team and prevent them from being drawn into an ambush, make sure everyone knows the LOA, especially in a developing situation. A quick radio call of “Those trees are the LOA” can go a long way to prevent people from getting lost or hurt.

The assaulting teams, no matter which option they choose, must stay roughly on-line and abreast of each other, to prevent friendly fire problems.

Reacting to Contact

Sometimes, the first indication that there is a hostile force (whether it be bandits, an occupying force, or an oppressive government) in the area is when rounds are fired your way or your team and theirs spot each other at the exact same time. We call that a “chance contact”.

When this happens, no matter what formation you are in, the first person to detect either hostile personnel or incoming fire shouts “CONTACT” and the direction (FRONT/LEFT/RIGHT/REAR). Note that directions can be multiples like “LEFT FRONT” or “RIGHT REAR”. Everyone else in the team in contact comes up into a line formation, facing the direction of contact, and takes the best covered and concealed position.

The second team can either come on line as well, or if they haven’t been engaged by the hostile element, begin moving to “flank” the hostile element as we discussed above.

Here, we are going to depart from Western military tactics. Standard military tactics call for either an immediate assault onto the enemy or calling for support. We don’t have support, and a direct assault will cost us casualties we can’t afford. In the military, they have field hospitals and medevac helicopters; we don’t. They also have reserves and the ability to replace dead or wounded soldiers, we don’t.

Our default position will be either a flank attack if we know that the hostile element is smaller than ours, or, if we don’t know the size, we will immediately break contact. It’s far better to get away and be able to fight on our terms at a place of our choosing.

The Vikings had a saying: “A Warrior can only die one time, so he must make it count – he cannot throw his life away.” That applies here. Our self-defense group has limited resources, so not only can we not spare the manpower, we also can’t dump a thousand rounds into a fight we can’t win. It is far better to run the “Break Contact Drill” that we will discuss.

But first, when taking incoming fire, we need to return fire, get into cover, and then get fire superiority before trying to move. The British call this the “RTR” drill:

R: Return Fire – Even just a few rounds to get the opposition to take cover so that you can safely get to cover without being seen.

T: Take Cover – Find the best covered and concealed position within a couple of steps from you. If possible, drop down and crawl to it. Remember to find cover, not just concealment. Use your Fieldcraft skills from TW-02.

R: Return Effective Fire – While we may have just fired in the general direction at the beginning to get heads down, we are now only returning fire on identified targets and trying to score hits, not just blindly blazing away.

If you don’t know where the hostile element is specifically, you can conduct what is called a “cover shoot”. Fire three rounds at every piece of good cover the hostile element might be using (one right side/one in the center/one left side).

After returning effective fire or doing a cover shoot, you should have gained enough breathing room for your patrol to decide what course of action to take. The squad leader has to decide which drill to execute:

1. Squad Attack Drill: Send an element to conduct a flank attack by a covered and concealed route while the fire support element maintains fire superiority. The squad leader will advise the team not in contact of the direction they are to move and any best route he can see, for example: “Second team move to the left flank of the hostile force using that hill for cover and let me know when you’re in position”. Under fire, clear and detailed instructions in plain English are far better than trying to sound like a 19th Century British General against the French.

2. Break Contact Drill: Begin breaking contact by fire and movement by sending the second team to set up the next overwatch position in the direction he wants to move. The squad leader will tell the whole patrol how far they are moving: “BREAK CONTACT 500 meters to the rear”. On the command, the element not in contact will call “MOVING” on the radio and then move 30-50 meters to the rear and set up an overwatch position and radio that they are “SET”. Upon hearing the other element call “SET”, the team in contact will immediately move 50-75 meters to their rear, calling “MOVING” when they leave and then “SET”, once they’ve set up overwatch. Repeat until contact is broken.

After any hostile contact, whether you assaulted through the hostile force or broke contact away from them, you need to do what we call consolidation, which is just a fancy word for checking on your people. Establish 360-degree security facing outboard and then call for an “ACE” report, as mentioned in other volumes.

ACE stands for “Ammunition, Casualties, and Equipment”. Each person will report if they need ammunition, if they’ve been wounded, or if they lost a key piece of gear. This is a vital habit to get into. As the patrol leader goes around the team collecting ACE reports, he will notice if anyone is missing. Another important thing here is that each person should quickly glance at their body because it’s quite common in combat for people to have been wounded and not noticed, due to the intensity of what was happening. A classic example of this is that President Ronald Reagan wasn’t aware he had been shot until they were driving away from the attack.

After taking the ACE reports, the patrol leader will announce the follow-up actions, and make sure everyone knows the plan before moving out to either continue the patrol or continue to evade the hostile force.

There’s an important point to be made here. The patrol leader should ensure that all contact gets reported by radio back to your base location. This is called sending in a “Situation Report” or “SITREP”. They need to be aware that a hostile force is in the area so that they can stand-to for security.

If you are breaking contact and returning to your base, don’t go directly to it. Head in the general direction and arrange for a team from the base to set up an ambush on a route you will lead any pursuing force past. You can

double back and join the ambush team and wait to see if anyone is following you before returning to your base. Remember the ultimate goal: To survive and only fight on our terms, away from our sanctuary.

We aren’t going to delve into more advanced squad tactics in this volume, because becoming a high-speed operator isn’t our goal. Our goal is the development of sufficient basic skills to allow us to defend ourselves against attack. More specific tactics will be discussed in later chapters.

Training Standard

- Describe Fire & Movement.
- Explain the Squad Attack.
- Demonstrate:
    - Fight Through
    - Assault Through
- Define the Limit of Advance (LOA).
- Describe the immediate action drill for Reacting to Contact.
- Explain R-T-R.
- Describe a Cover Shoot.
- Demonstrate how to “Break Contact”.
- Explain what actions should be taken during the consolidation phase.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 4

Basic Scouting Skills

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed,
and nothing concealed that will not be known
or brought out into the open.
Luke 8:17

The entire purpose of scouting is finding the hidden things and gaining knowledge of that which is concealed, so the above Tactical Wisdom is very applicable here. We are sending out scouts and patrols to gather information that we can use to protect ourselves and make better decisions for the long-term survival of our community or group.

However, it's not as simple as just sending people out to have a look. There are very specific scouting skills that can make or break your patrol. Many of these were briefly discussed in TW-02 Fieldcraft, but we will expand on some here and review some of them.

Once these skills are learned, make them a regular part of your training and readiness routine. Like all physical skills, if you don't use them, you lose them.

Using Cover & Concealment

We talk a lot about cover and concealment, and if you've read the other titles in this series, you know what it is. To be an effective scout, we need to know how to best utilize cover and concealment while observing. There are a few concepts that help us improve our ability to remain concealed while observing.

Ever been totally focused on a task, like maybe writing a book, and then something in the corner of the room moves? Instantly, your eyes shift to the item that moved. It's a great tool that God built into you for self-preservation. Things that move in your environment are things that can hurt you.

Keeping that in mind, the first scouting skill is to learn to be still. There is a tendency towards movement that is inherent in human beings, but if we are going to be scouting in a potentially hostile environment, we need to be able to limit our movement to the bare minimum necessary. We should always remain motionless while observing. It takes practice to keep from fidgeting.

The next tip is also based on human nature. Humans are creatures of habit, and they look for expected things in expected places. For example, we look for other people normally at our eye level. Simply taking a knee or going prone gets you out of that line of sight. Also, when there is a fence or a wall, we tend to look for other humans above it, rather than below it. We can use this by always observing from the prone position. That's right: get used to getting dirty.

The prone position not only gets you out of the line of sight, it also will protect you from any sudden incoming fire by making you a much smaller target.

Use the same thought process when using a log or rock for cover. Humans would naturally look on top of the log or rock for a human head, so look around the end instead. If you are properly camouflaged, you will blend right in. Look around the base of trees and bushes while prone behind them. Look under things rather than over them.

CORRECT OBSERVING POSITION PRONE AROUND RIGHT SIDE OF TREE
FROM A DITCH OBSERVE OVER BROKEN EDGE WITH BACKGROUND
OBSERVE THRU BUSH IN PRONE POSITION
OBSERVE OVER A CREST AT A POINT WHERE IT IS BROKEN OR GRASSY
OBSERVE PRONE AROUND RIGHT SIDE OF ROCK
OBSERVE PRONE UNDER CROSSBAR OF FENCE

Source: USMC MCWP 3-11.3 Scouting & Patrolling

A scout should never contrast with the background. Make sure that whatever you're wearing matches the colors around you (including appropriate camouflage patterns for the area). You should never silhouette yourself against the sky.

Camouflage skills, discussed in TW-02 Fieldcraft, are an essential skill set for a scout.

Try to not to expose anything that reflects light. Cover your watchband or wear it so that it is not exposed. If you are going to use binoculars, you can drape them with a small camouflage net or use a “sniper’s veil” (small section of camouflage mesh). Most binoculars or spotting scopes have the glass shaded already, but some hunting optics (scopes) might not.
A great scouting tool dates back to World War 1, and we see it making a huge comeback during the Russo-Ukrainian War. It’s called a trench periscope, but it can be used for any type of observation where you don’t want to expose your head. All that is exposes is a very small lens, less than 2 inches square. The lens, by nature of being a periscope, is angled so it won’t likely reflect light or shine. You can put a shade over the lens if you are worried about shine. You can also use it to look around corners or observe out windows, without exposing your head.
Another tool for observation is creating or using “artificial horizons” to detect others. If you get your face very close to the ground, you lower the horizon, causing objects, or people, in the direction you are looking to be silhouetted and easier to see. At night, rivers, lakes, trails, and roads appear different than the normal surroundings, and you can create an artificial horizon with them, watching for people or vehicles to pass against them.

Essential Skills for the Lead/Point Scout

The person on “point” is your Lead Scout, the person out in front. While we’ve already mentioned that they need to have the best scouting skill set, there are some specific things that can help ensure that the point person is doing what you need.
The person on point must be the best at using all their senses to detect anomalies. When using sight, they should know to be looking for human shapes, such as the “A” shape made by human legs when walking. Straight lines don’t often appear in nature and are generally man-made. Another key scouting point is that there is a general tendency among humans to not camouflage rifles for fear of hindering their operations, so a good point scout knows how to identify weapons.
When considering sound, not only should actual sounds be considered, but the absence of sound should be noted. Animals and insects get quiet when humans are around. If, while on patrol, you come across an area where the ambient wildlife noise is absent, you may be about to encounter other

humans or walk into an ambush. The sounds of coughs and sniffles also mean human beings. Any metallic sound is inherently man-made as well. A less common one is the sound of water being parted or boots being pulled out of mud.

The sense of smell can help. The smell of smoke is inherently man-made, as are cooking smells. City-dwellers smell different that country folks, and in a WROL society, hygiene will allow you to smell people. Also, soap and detergent scents are good to know.

Even the sense of touch is helpful for the lead scout. Touching the ground in a small depression may reveal that it is warm because a human was recently laying there. Touching a rock may reveal that it is wet from someone who recently walked past it with wet legs.

The Lead Scout should be well-trained in using all of their senses.

The Point Scout should also be an effective communicator. In our situation, everyone will likely have their own VHF/UHF radio, and the Point Scout definitely should. They should be able to quickly communicate what they are seeing to the Team Leader. They also need some ability for silent communication. You can use a series of radio microphone clicks to communicate if you planned out the number and spacing in advance (or used Morse Code). Your group should also develop its own set of hand and arm signals for silent communication.

A method for silent self-defense for the Point Scout or Lead Scout can save the entire patrol. They need to have a knife or bayonet along with the skills to use them effectively. Knife fighting and bayonet fighting, along with cold firearms combatives (using your rifle to hit people) should be part of your training regimen. Suppressors are also becoming increasingly easier to obtain and are helpful for the Lead Scout. If you don’t have a suppressor, bows and crossbows are silent and have been effectively used in combat for thousands of years.

Lead or Point Scouts should be well-versed in breaching obstacles. They should have the tools and skills available to cut wire or fencing.

The skills needed for a Lead/Point Scout can be developed through training over time. In other words, get started now. Hunting is a great way to develop scouting skills.

Nighttime Considerations

The first scouting consideration at night is the understanding that sound travels much farther at night than it does during the day. You can use that to

your advantage by putting out listening posts, but you must also consider it related to the amount of noise that your movement makes.
You can improve your ability to hear by removing any helmet or ear protection. You can also cup your hands behind your ears and open your mouth to hear better at night. To determine direction by sound, turn until you can hear the sound equally in both ears and your nose will pointing in the direction of the sound.
You also need to understand how the human eye sees at night. During the day, you look directly at objects to see them. At night, because of how our natural night vision works, if you look directly at something, it will vanish. You have to use “off-center” vision, looking slightly to the left or right, above or below an object to see it. You can scan your eyes in short movements all around an object to see it.

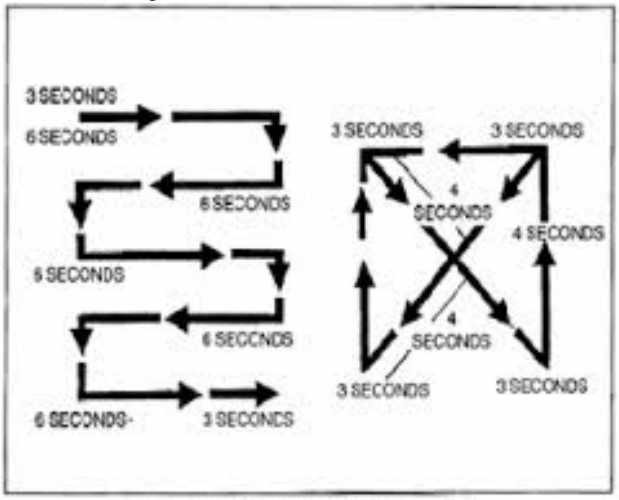


Figure K-1. Typical scanning patterns.

Source: US Army, FM 7-93 LRSU Operations

Estimating Range

A scout must be able to accurately estimate the range to an object or group of people.
The easiest method is the unit of measure. One football field is 100 yards. Estimate the number of football fields and you’ve got the range. Since the whole world deals in meters now, a soccer field is 100 meters, which is the same as a football field plus one end zone. When estimating over 400 meters, estimate the range to the halfway point, then double it.
With experience, you learn how to recognize objects at certain distances. Here a couple of tables to help with range estimation.

Table 11-1. Effects in Mental Estimation of Distance.	
Objects Appear Nearer	**Objects Appear More Distant**
In bright light.	In poor light or in fog.
In clear air at high altitude.	Only a small part of the object can be seen.
The background is in contrast with the color of the object.	The background is similar in color to that of the object.
The observer is looking down from a height.	The observer is looking over a depression, most of which is visible.
The observer is looking over a depression, most of which is hidden.	The observer is kneeling or sitting, especially on a hot day, when the ground is moist.
The observer is looking down a straight feature, such as a road.	
The observer is looking over water, snow, or a uniform surface, such as a cultivated field or desert.	

Source: USMC MCTP 3-01a Scouting & Patrolling

Table 11-2. Estimating Distance in Wooded Terrain.	
Distance (meters)	**Tree Description**
1,000	Trunk and main branches are visible. Foliage appears in cluster-like shape. Daylight may be seen through the foliage.
2,000	Trunk visible, main branches distinguishable. Foliage appears as a smooth surface. The outline of foliage of separate trees is distinguishable.
3,000	Lower half of trunk visible. Branches blend with foliage. Foliage blends with adjoining trees.
4,000	Trunk and branches blend with foliage and appears as a continuous cluster, smooth in appearance. Movement of foliage due to wind cannot be detected.
5,000 & beyond	Whole area covered by trees and appears smooth and dark.

Source: USMC MCTP 3-01a Scouting & Patrolling

Table 11-3. Estimating Range in Urban Areas.	
Distance (meters)	**Object that can be Observed by the Unaided Eye**
1,000	Lone tree trunk
1,500	Individuals and large animals, such as cows
3,000	Chimneys on rooftops
4,000	Windows in houses
4,000-5,000	Individual houses in populated area
8,000-9,000	Villages or individual houses
15,000-18,000	Large houses, towers, and steeples

Source: USMC MCTP 3-01a Scouting & Patrolling

Training Standard

- Explain the proper use of cover and concealment for scouts.
- Explain what an artificial horizon is and how to use it.
- List at least 4 skills that a point scout should have.
- Describe how to see better at night.
- Explain how to estimate range and the factors that affect it.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 5

Advanced Land Navigation

Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.
Psalm 25:4

If we're going to send out a patrol, they need to able to find their way. Since we are talking about a WROL situation, the likelihood is that the GPS satellite systems will be down. The US military is training to reduce their reliance on GPS technology, so we should too.

The great thing about paper maps and a good compass is that they cannot be hacked. The Earth will always be a giant rock with magnetic properties, so as long as you have a quality map and a solid compass, you will be able to find your location with 10 meters on that map.

In TW-02 Fieldcraft, we gave a great breakdown of Land Navigation, and in this volume we're to expand on those skills and add some natural ones. Having the ability to navigate without a compass or map and have a general idea of where you are going can help you when lost and separated from your gear in an emergency.

To begin, let's review the most basic map and compass skills from TW-02 Fieldcraft.

Land Navigation Review

An azimuth is the heading to a particular spot. For example, if I want to know the azimuth I'm moving on, I will pick out an item in front of me, hold my compass steady and level, and point the compass at the object. The number underneath the index line (after turning the bezel to line up the North arrow) is the azimuth to that object, or the heading I'm moving along.

A back azimuth is just like it sounds, the heading I'd need to follow if I wanted to turn around and go back in the direction I came. It's useful to know this when following a route, and then returning. On the way out, you'll follow the planned azimuths. On your way back, you'll compute and follow the back azimuths.

To compute a back azimuth, if the current azimuth is more than 180 degrees, subtract 180. If the current azimuth is less than 180 degrees, add 180 to it to get the back azimuth.

On your map, the map legend contains information on how to read the map and what all the symbols mean.
The key piece of marginal information on the map is the “GM Angle” or declination. The Earth is giant rock, and its magnetic properties are not constant. The magnetic north pole is not directly on top of the earth. The declination shows you how many degrees to add or subtract to find true north, also known as Grid North – “GM Angle” refers to the difference between Grid North (the top of your map) and Magnetic North.
If you don’t adjust for declination or the GM Angle either mathematically or by adjusting your compass, you will drift off target. For a short distance, like 500 meters, that’s not a big deal. However, if you move 5 miles, you could be off by half a mile or more. It multiplies quickly. Some compasses allow you to manually adjust your compass so that they match, but it’s easier to just remember to make the addition or subtraction.
In order to navigate using a map, we have to know where we are. This is called “orienting” the map. If we know what direction north is, like by using our compass, minus the declination, we start by turning the map until the top is pointed north.
Now that we have it facing the right way, we need to know exactly where we are. The process of finding our location is called “resection”.
To perform Resection:

- Locate two terrain features that you can see that are on the map.
- Using the compass, determine the azimuth to each object and write it down.
- Convert the magnetic azimuths to a grid azimuth by subtracting or adding the GM angle/declination.
- Convert to a back azimuth using the above formula (adding or subtracting 180 degrees).
- Using a map protractor or your compass, draw a straight line on the map from both terrain features on the back azimuth.
- Where the line intersects is where you are standing.

To find the map coordinates of something you see and want to notate, like a potentially hostile camp, or a sighting of another group, we do the exact opposite and it’s called finding a location by intersection.
To perform Intersection:

- Once your map is oriented and you know your location, shoot an azimuth to the location you want to find and write it down, adjusting for the GM angle.
- Move to another location and shoot an azimuth to the location again.
- Using your compass or a map protractor, draw lines from the two known locations on the azimuths you wrote down.
- Where the lines cross is the location you want the coordinates of.
- Use the romer (see below) to get the coordinates.

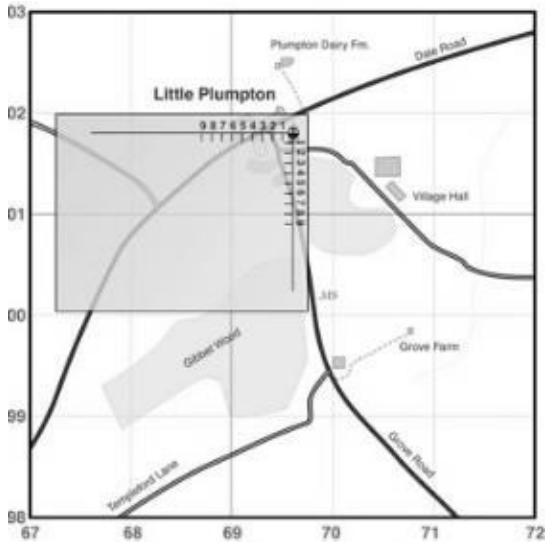
Maps, especially topographical maps, are broken down into grid squares, with numerical designations.

To determine the location coordinates on the map, use the “romer” of the appropriate scale to find the exact coordinates. A “romer” is template for breaking a grid square down to a specific point. On a grid map, “eastings” are the vertical lines, running north to south and they are numbered from left to right (going east). “Northings” are the horizontal lines running west-east, and they are numbered from bottom to the top (going north).

Generally, just knowing the easting and northing results in a large area. We define that as a grid square, and it is named according to the lines which meet in the southwest corner. A four-digit grid gives the easting first and the northing second. Depending on the map scale, that can result in a huge area.

We read these grids by going across first, then up. The British have a catchy phrase for teaching this I once learned from a Royal Marine: “Go down the corridor, then up the stairs”.

To make it more precise, the romer breaks a grid square into tenths for a “6-digit grid”. You place the corner of the romer on the spot you want a coordinate of, and the nearest number where the romer crosses the grid becomes the third number in the easting and northing.



Using a Romer (Wikipedia)

Some maps come with 3-digit easting and northing grids. They allow your coordinates to be even more accurate and are called an “8-digit grid”.

Planning A Route

For our scouting and patrolling purposes, we’re going to plan our routes differently than conventional military units, so all you veterans, don’t start shouting. Our objective is to find out if anyone else is in our area, so we are going to intentionally plan our routes for that purpose.

The first thing we’re going to do is lose the military tendency to plan routes based upon religiously following a map and compass (known as “dead reckoning”). Instead, we’re going to select terrain features that will be easily identifiable and plan our route to follow them, which will allow us to use the ground to stay on course, rather than slavishly following a map. It’s far more intuitive. We call this method “Terrain Association”.

When planning, select terrain that affords you a tactical benefit if you encounter chance contact while on it. Select routes using key terrain, with good observation, and available cover & concealment for your patrol. For example, a ridgeline that your team can follow, remaining just below the crest and dominating the terrain below. This allows your team to always have the tactical advantage.

Try to use terrain that will obscure your team. Pick ground with tree cover, to prevent anyone with a drone seeing you below the canopy. Ground that causes deep shadow is good for concealment also. Another consideration is that dense forest absorbs sound, making you harder to detect, but that works both ways.

Select a route that allows you to make good time, while also avoiding large danger areas that you will need to cross. Look for obstacles and plan your routes around them ahead of time, to prevent you from having to find a solution on the fly. Pre-planning is always better than crisis response.
To use terrain association for navigation, plan the route on the map, then determine the compass azimuths you'll need to follow it. In dead reckoning (traditional compass navigation), you do it the other way around. While planning the route, at key checkpoints, determine the azimuth and distance to easily identifiable landmarks like large hills or intersections, so that while at the checkpoint, you can spot check yourself using the compass, but not needing a map. Make sure though, while planning, that you convert the grid azimuth to a magnetic one using the declination angle, otherwise you will get lost.
A benefit to terrain association planning is that dead reckoning doesn't plan for things that happen. Let's say your patrol was moving and was ambushed. You had to break contact 700 meters to the east before getting clear. You can't just go back to using the dead reckoning plan, because you are 700 meters off already. With terrain association, you just find your next planned landmark to get back on track.

Triangulation

To get an even more accurate reading than just intersection, if you carefully measure the distance between the two single points you used and draw that line on the map, you have an even more accurate position for yourself in relation to the target, rather than just knowing you are somewhere along the back azimuth.

Route Card

A route card is a planning document that lists each leg, it's direction and distance, and the nearest terrain feature to use to make sure that you are on track. Using that card allows you to not have to keep pulling out your map to make sure you are staying on track.

Small Danger Areas

In TW-02 Fieldcraft, we discussed the safest method for crossing a large danger area. If you use that method for all small danger areas, you'll get bogged down and off schedule. What we need is a quicker, yet secure method for crossing very small danger areas.

The ‘Bump Method’ is quick and secure method for crossing small trails or clearings safely without slowing down the patrol’s progress. The lead buddy pair, when they encounter the danger area, notify the rest of the patrol. When the team leader decides to use the Bump Method, the second buddy pair moves up to ‘Bump’ the first buddy pair, who then move across the danger area and take up a security posture. Each buddy pair in the patrol ‘Bumps’ the next one up, until all teams have crossed the danger area and continued on the original route.
This method ensures that no more than two patrol members are in the danger area at any time, reducing the risk. It also allows the lead pair to start movement back along the main axis of advance as soon as the next team crosses and ‘Bumps’ them out of position.

Field Expedient Navigation

In an emergency, we may need to navigate without having a compass or a map. Take heart, humans have navigated far longer than we’ve had compasses.

1. Watch Method – Northern Hemisphere
    a. Make sure the watch is ACCURATE.
    b. This method works from 0600 to 1800 (daylight hours only).
    c. Point the hour hand at the Sun.
    d. South is halfway between the hour hand and 12.
    e. During Daylight Savings Time, it’s halfway between 1 and the hour hand.
2. Watch Method – Southern Hemisphere
    a. Make sure the watch is ACCURATE.
    b. This method works from 0600 to 1800 (daylight hours only).
    c. Point 12 o’clock at the Sun.
    d. North is halfway between 12 and the hour hand.
    e. During Daylight Savings Time, it’s halfway between 1 and the hour hand.
3. Big Dipper/Plough Constellation – Northern Hemisphere
    a. The two stars at the end of the of Big Dipper/Plough, farthest from the handle, are called the “Pointer

Stars”.

b. If you follow a line away from the top of the bowl on the Dipper to a point 5 times the distance between the two stars, you will find the North Star, which is over the North Pole.
c. The Big Dipper revolves around the North Star, so this works year-round in the Northern Hemisphere.

4. Cassiopeia Constellation – Northern Hemisphere
    a. Directly opposite the Big Dipper/Plough, the Cassiopeia Constellation also revolves around the North Star (in fact, the first star in Cassiopeia and the first star in the handle of the Big Dipper/Plough are on a line with the North Star in the middle and so are the second stars in each).
    b. Cassiopeia is a W-shaped Constellation, and the top of the W generally points to the North Star.
5. Southern Cross – Southern Hemisphere
    a. The Southern Cross is a 5-Star Constellation that makes a cross shape with one star beside it (four stars form the Cross).
    b. The foot of the Cross points south.
    c. A point directly above the South Pole is 4.5 times the length of the Cross from the bottom of it.

Training Standard

- Explain what an azimuth is.
- Demonstrate how to compute a back azimuth.
- Explain declination and how to correct for it.
- Plot a point on the ground using resection and locate an unknown point using intersection.
- Describe what factors go into patrol route selection.
- Explain navigation by terrain association.
- Fill out a route card.
- Describe the bump method for crossing danger areas.
- Explain at least two field expedient ways to navigate without a compass.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 6

Reconnaissance Patrols

I set out during the night with a few others…
Nehemiah 2:12a

Nehemiah led an expedition to Jerusalem after it had been completely destroyed. His forces occupied the city, and he knew that bad folks were going to oppose his mission of re-building the city's defenses. That sure sounds like a WROL situation to me. To know how best to defend the city, Nehemiah needed to know who was out and around their perimeter. In order to do that, he went out on a reconnaissance patrol, as described above.

Reconnaissance is defined as:

a mission to obtain information by visual observation or other detection methods, about the activities and resources of an enemy or potential enemy, or about the meteorologic, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area.
US Army FM 7-92

For our purposes, it means going and taking a look at areas, routes, or territory to learn what is happening around us to enable us to make better decisions related to our safety and security.

In a WROL society, security must become an obsession, as there will be bad actors out looking for an easy score, and lots of hungry and desperate people looking for opportunities. Developing awareness of our situation and projecting a strong and ready image will send them elsewhere to look for plunder.

We use a simple acronym to remember the four fundamentals of reconnaissance, GATE. Remember, acronyms make us sound cool and high-speed.

G	Gather the required information. Every recon patrol must have informational goals.
A	Avoid detection. Any time that we go out on a recon patrol, we use stealth and remain concealed.
T	Task organize. We must adapt our patrol organization to best meet the mission goals.

E	Employ security measures. Our own security is more important than any other goal.

A key point for preparing for any type of recon patrol is to bring paper. I recommend Rite in the Rain notebooks and pens so that your notes survive anything that happens. All of the information you gathered needs to be written down. Don't rely on your memory; write it down.

A secondary point is to ensure that everyone in the patrol knows what information has been gathered. Let's be honest: there is the potential that not everyone will make it back. Everyone needs to know all of the information gathered.

There are three types of recon patrols that we run:

1. Area Recon: The British call this Close Target Recce, and the Canadians call it Point Recce. These are all the same. Area Recon is going to take a look at a particular spot, like a road intersection or a building.
2. Route Recon: This recon is done along a road or route and is done to decide if the route is safe and usable, and to gather information about potential danger areas or safe harbors along the route.
3. Zone Recon: This is patrolling a large area to see what's out there. For example, checking along a railroad bed or utility line corridor to see if anyone is using it.

These three can also be blended. One team can be conducting a route recon along a road, while a second team conducts a zone recon in the woods along the road. You could conduct a zone recon on the way to conduct an area recon at a specific point.

Task Organization

When a team or a larger group heads out for a recon patrol, they have to organize into task-specific teams. We're not changing the buddy pair or fire team organization; we're just assigning specific duties to each.

Every recon patrol needs a recon element, who conducts the recon and gathers the information, and a security element, who provides security for the recon element. In a fire team, one buddy pair is the recon element, and the other is the security element.

You could also have both buddy teams function as "recon & security" or R/S teams, where one person provides security and the other gathers

information. You could mix it up on an area recon mission, with one team providing security for the other, which is an R/S team, with one person gathering the information and the other providing security.
The point is to make sure that everyone knows at the outset of the operation what their specific role is. There is no right or wrong way, just be sure that everyone knows their specific role on the patrol.

Rally Points/Rendezvous Points

When conducting any kind of reconnaissance, we use a technique called "rally points" for control and emergency planning. The Commonwealth forces (UK/AUS/CAN/NZ) call these "rendezvous points", but they are the same thing. During planning, you abbreviate them as "RP" or "RV". Let's face it, we want to sound cool and using British terms like "kit" and "RV Point" make us sound high-speed and very cool.
A rally point is a spot on the ground that is easy for everyone to find and that can be defended. It might be a wooded hilltop, a streambed that serves as a trench, or a large rock outcropping; it just needs to be something that can be easily found and defended. If the team is ambushed and must break contact, everyone will make their way back to the last rally point to reunite and consolidate.
Also, if a team member gets separated for any reason, they should make their way back to the last rally point and wait. The rest of the team should double back to the last rally point as well, rather than blunder around looking for the lost person. You're far more likely to find each other if you all go to the same place than if you are both wandering around looking for each other.
Rally points are designated by the leader as the team moves. When the leader finds a good spot, they can either radio the information to the rest of the team, or use the standard hand-and-arm signal for an RP/RV, which is pointing at your belt buckle, then pointing at the selected RP/RV. The leader should pick a new one every 400-500 meters. These are called "Enroute Rally Points" or ERP/ERV.
When planning, you need to designate ahead of time an "Objective Rally Point/Objective Rendezvous Point" or ORP/ORV. This is a rally point near the objective, but one terrain feature away, such as a hill or a block in an urban setting, where the team can make final preparations for their mission. It should offer good cover and be concealed.

In an area recon, for example, the team might hide their rucks and break out observation and recording gear at the ORP/ORV. In an ambush they might get out extra ammunition or early detection devices. Rucks are always dropped at the ORP/ORV to allow freedom of movement. If the team is pushed off their objective and must break contact, the ORP/ORV being one terrain feature away and defensible allows the team to regroup and consolidate while picking up their rucks before moving on.
The ORP must:

- Be large enough to hold the team.
- Defensible for a short period.
- Away from natural lines of drift (trails/roads).
- In a covered and concealed location.

Area Recon

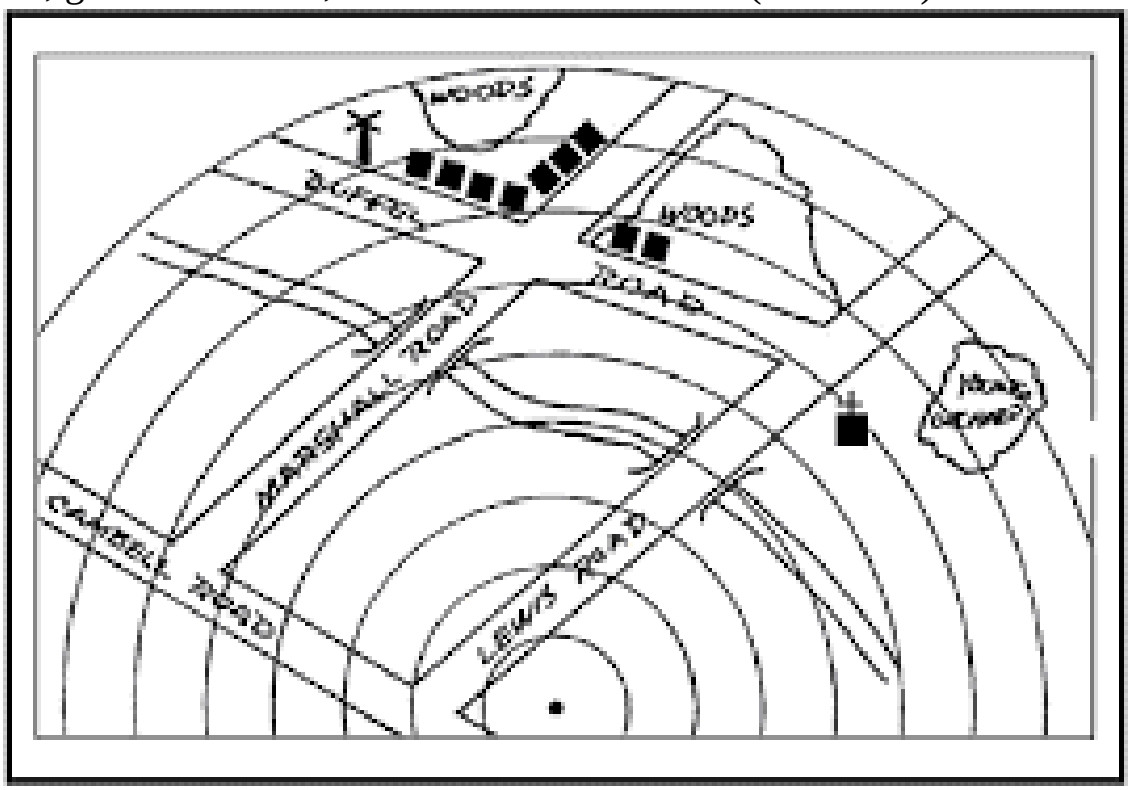
When we have specific location that we want to take a look at or observe, we conduct what is called an “Area Recon”. We might want to look at a location of a suspected camp, somewhere we saw smoke from, or a particular intersection.
We do that by dispatching a team to go and observe. We can send one to three fire teams, but anything larger risks detection. Two teams is the optimal number for an area recon.
Once we’ve planned the route using terrain association and selected a tentative ORP, it’s time to begin movement, after making sure everyone has the proper gear.
A lot of veterans are probably wondering why I don’t have a lot of data on the passage of friendly lines and coordination, but the truth is that in a civilian defense or WROL setting, we don’t need all that extra work and formality. You should know what patrols are going where and we really won’t have multiple patrols out at once or long front lines requiring coordination. Simply make sure everyone knows that friendlies are out and the right radio frequencies for when the patrol returns.
When the patrol arrives near the ORP, they conduct a halt just before it and conducts an SLLS (Stop/Look/Listen/Smell) by either taking a knee or going prone and observing the location for 10-15 minutes. Once it is confirmed that it is unoccupied and safe, the team then immediately occupies the ORP and forms a perimeter, in the prone position, facing outboard and covering all 360 degrees. The military calls this “occupation

by force” and it’s the best way for our purposes, as long as we conducted a good SLLS prior to occupying the ORP.
The team leader then checks to make sure the security perimeter is set up and prepares to conduct a “Leader’s Recon”. This is where the leader, with another person for security, goes forward and checks conditions to make sure that the plan will work. It’s not the full area recon, it is just a confirmation that planned observation posts/vantage points are going to work to accomplish the goal.
Any time the leader leaves the patrol, they issue a five-point contingency plan, which call a GOTWA. Remember, acronyms make us sound cool and like top-tier operators. The leader briefs the team on the following five items:

G	Going - Where the leader is going. This should be specific.
O	Others – Who is going with the leader. Also, designate who is in charge in the interim.
T	Time – Time the leader expects to return or the time he expects to be gone.
W	What – What to do if the leader does not return within the designated time period.
A	Action – Action to take if either the team or leader makes contact with hostile parties.

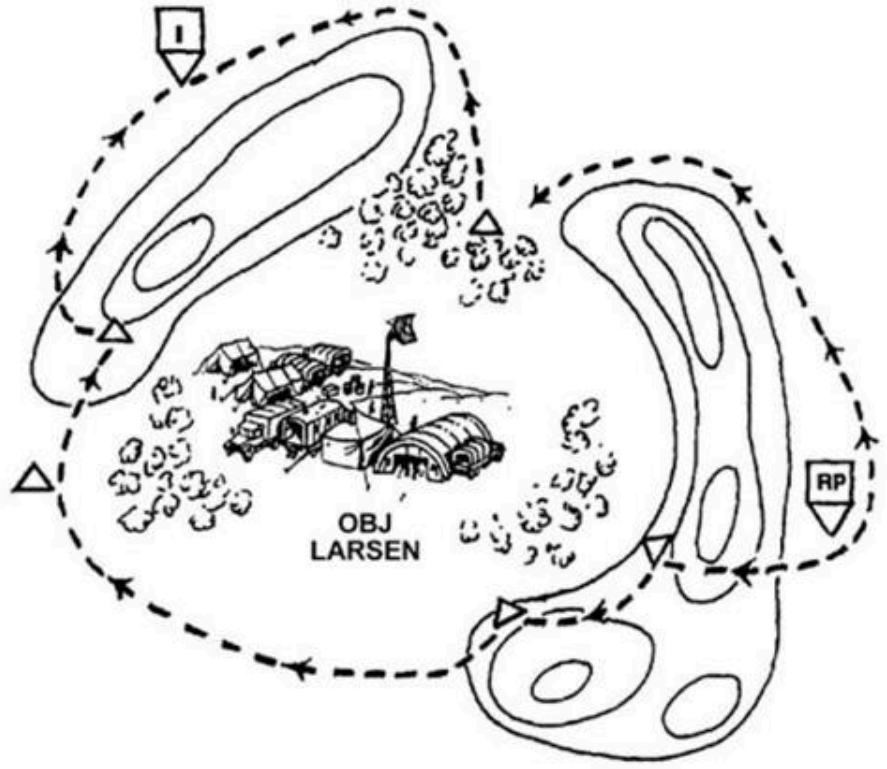
Get in the habit of issuing GOTWA plans anytime the leader leaves the patrol for any reason.
After the leader returns, he either briefs everyone on adjustments to the plan based on his observations or releases the team to conduct the mission.
Everyone conceals their rucks as best they can, preferably leaving the top carry handle facing up in case they need to grab them on the run.
At least two people should remain in the ORP as the security team while the rest of the team conducts the recon. This might mean that two people, acting as a recon & security team, conduct the observation, or whatever your plan was. You may have a four-person security team at the ORP and a four-person recon & security team observing, or two two-person recon &

security teams observing from different vantage points. The key thing is to have a plan and stick to it.
On an area recon, the teams observing keep a written log of what they see, described as fully as possible. They also complete a sketch of what the objective area looks like from their vantage point, complete with a north arrow, grid coordinates, and all features drawn in (see below).



Range Card used to draw a sketch

After the team has gathered the required information, the recon teams return to the ORP. The team leader gathers all the information and makes sure that everyone in the team knows what information was gathered. This is in case only one person gets back to the secure location to report in. Disseminate the information to everyone. Sketches and notes are kept by the team leader. The team then moves out and heads either back to their secure location (by a different route than they came in on) or to their next objective. It is possible to send a patrol to check out two or three objectives on the same area recon.
Another way of performing close target recon or area recon is called the “Cloverleaf Method”. The recon team first observes one side for a period time, then moves out and observes another side. The repeat this in a cloverleaf pattern until they have observed all four sides of the objective.



Route Recon

A route recon is a patrol to inspect a particular road route. During a route recon, you are looking at the condition of the road, potential danger areas, activity on and around the roadway, and the potential for its use.

According to the US Army's Manual ADRP 3-90, the definition of a route recon is:

Route reconnaissance is a directed effort to obtain detailed information of a specified route and all terrain from which the enemy could influence movement along the route.

As the definition says, not only do you look at the road itself, but you also need dismount elements to get out and look at the terrain overlooking the route. You want to be sure that no one else has an observation post or, even worse, an ambush set up along the road.

This might seem excessive, but recent examples of WROL situations like the Balkan Wars, Hurricane Katrina, and the Donbas/Russo-Ukrainian War, tell us that highway robbery will be one of the first activities to start happening in affected areas. Before moving any number of supplies or protected people (children and elderly, for example) along a route, you need to conduct a route recon.

For our purposes, a route recon is not as detailed as it would be for a military unit. We aren't as concerned with width of the roadway or the pitch of curves, as we aren't running extremely top-heavy armored vehicles on it, but there are certain areas we will need to focus on.

We discussed route selection in TW-02 Fieldcraft and vehicle operations in TW-03 Defensive Operations, but we will recap some points here. We are drawing these points from experience in real-world WROL conditions driving protected personnel through contested or disputed territory with little to no law enforcement presence and various armed militias serving various factions. This sounds exactly like the conditions we envision in a WROL situation.

Always being with a map recon. Start by looking at a map and selecting the route carefully. You want to avoid built up areas and travel in as open of territory as possible, to prevent anyone from having an opportunity to set an ambush. Another key point to this is that open territory allows your radios to work with as little interference as possible.

After selecting the route, the route recon is done by actually driving the route. It's best to do this in two vehicles, even if you are only using one 4-person team. This way, one vehicle can provide security overwatch for the other and if one vehicle becomes disabled, you can still use the second vehicle. This may involve putting two people in each car, or three if using a 6-person team, or even four when using an 8-person element.

No matter how many people, the driver's main job is to drive and the person in the front passenger seat is the "vehicle commander" who is actually doing the recon and recording the results. The vehicle commander in each vehicle should take their own notes, and the team will compile them together in the end. Any additional people provide security overwatch and can contribute to the notes, but the vehicle commander documents the notes.

The following areas should be noted as potential danger areas:

- Any terrain feature or building that dominates the road and could be used to observe or ambush vehicles.
- Areas with other vehicles parked along the road, offering cover to potential attackers and limiting your ability to go off-road in an emergency.

- Traffic circles or major intersections.
- Bridges, tunnels, and areas that constrict or restrict traffic.
- Large culverts going under the road.
- Stretches of road with large ditches that could hold potentially dangerous elements.
- Damaged areas of roadways.
- Areas that appear “contested”; meaning that they show evidence of recent fighting or damage.
- Any area where you find a shot-up vehicle.
- Winding and curvy sections of road that some force could put a roadblock or checkpoint on, which you couldn’t see until too late.
- Areas in which you know prior incidents have occurred.

These mark areas to either avoid or use more caution when traversing these areas. They should be noted in your route recon notes for inclusion in your reporting at the end of the recon.

Dominant terrain features identified during a route recon, should have some type of a dismounted element get out and scout them. Look at the route from the vantage point of a potential adversary that the feature or high building offers. See how far away they will be able to see you and how long they’ll be able to watch you after you pass.

Bridges and overpasses should also be scouted on foot, to view the roadway from an adversarial point of view. Get out and look in culverts under the roadway to see they could hold people or Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).

When conducting the route recon, the vehicles should travel one directly behind the other, spaced far enough apart that an IED or gunfire won’t strike both vehicles. The vehicles should stop before cresting hills or driving around blind corners to check for roadblocks or obstructions. Never drive faster than you can secure by observation.

For communications, each vehicle should be outfitted with a more powerful radio than a handheld. VHF/UHF dual band mobile radios should be in the 25–50-watt range at a minimum. This should allow the teams to stay in contact with each other. The radios in the vehicles should be able to communicate with any elements that dismount on foot (VHF/UHF handhelds). Another good option for vehicle communications are CB radios with Single-Sideband (SSB) capability. Your dismount teams could use

handheld CB's. A lot of people are against handheld CB units due to their size and battery use, but QYT and President have powerful handhelds with rechargeable batteries and smaller size.

Zone Recon

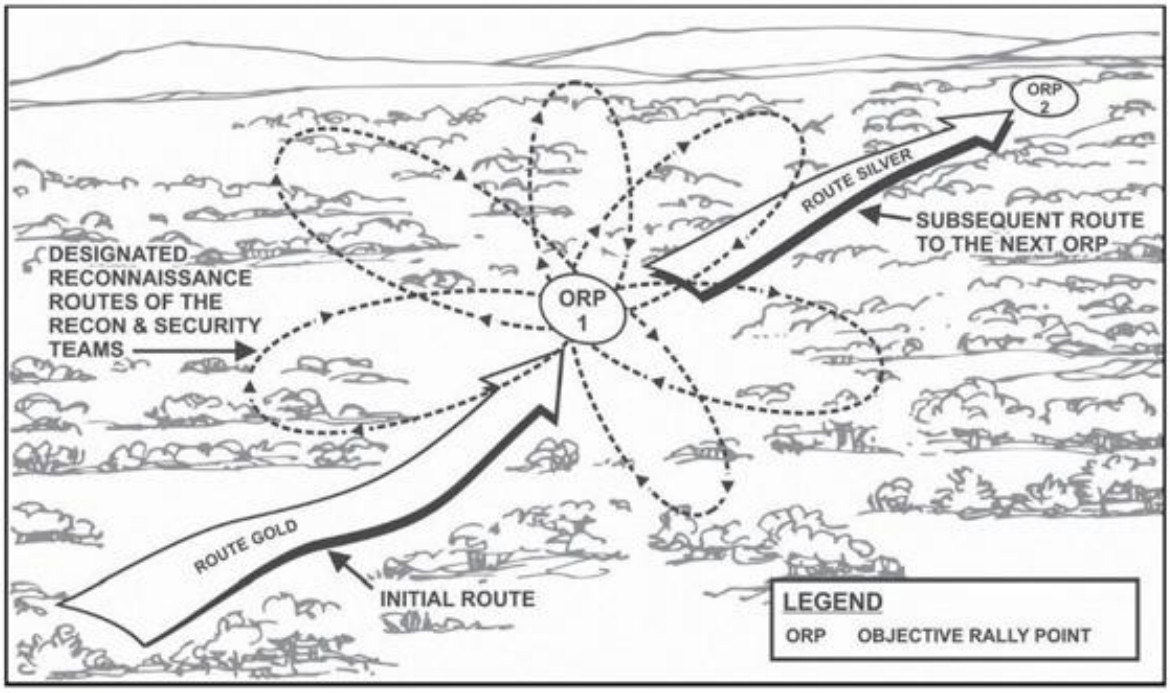
Any time we want to gather information about an area, we need to get out and go look at it. While an Area Recon was focuses on a specific location and a Route Recon focuses on roads, a Zone Recon has us looking at the general area. We are just getting out and looking at various areas where others might observe us from or where they have to travel to get near us or any other location we are concerned with.

During the Malaysian Emergency, Commonwealth Forces learned that they couldn't rely on old-fashioned large unit sweeps and operations to find small guerilla elements hiding in the countryside. They re-formed the "Special Air Service", including British, Australian, Rhodesian, and New Zealander squadrons and also brought in special units of the Royal Marines. During this time, these specialized units perfected the art of Zone Recon patrolling.

In this section, we're going to begin with basic methods of Zone recon, then introduce some of the special skills that the Commonwealth Forces developed during their "scouting" programs in Malaysia. Their problem of trying to find very small, hostile elements that were intent on raiding their facilities is very similar to what we will encounter in a WROL situation. The goal here for us isn't necessarily the same as for a military unit, so we may modify our approach. In military operations, the goal is to make contact and engage the enemy. For us, our goal is to locate unknown parties and observe them to determine their intent, so we need to be much more careful and use skills that lend to us seeing others before being seen.

Let's look at some types of Zone Recon.

Fan Method

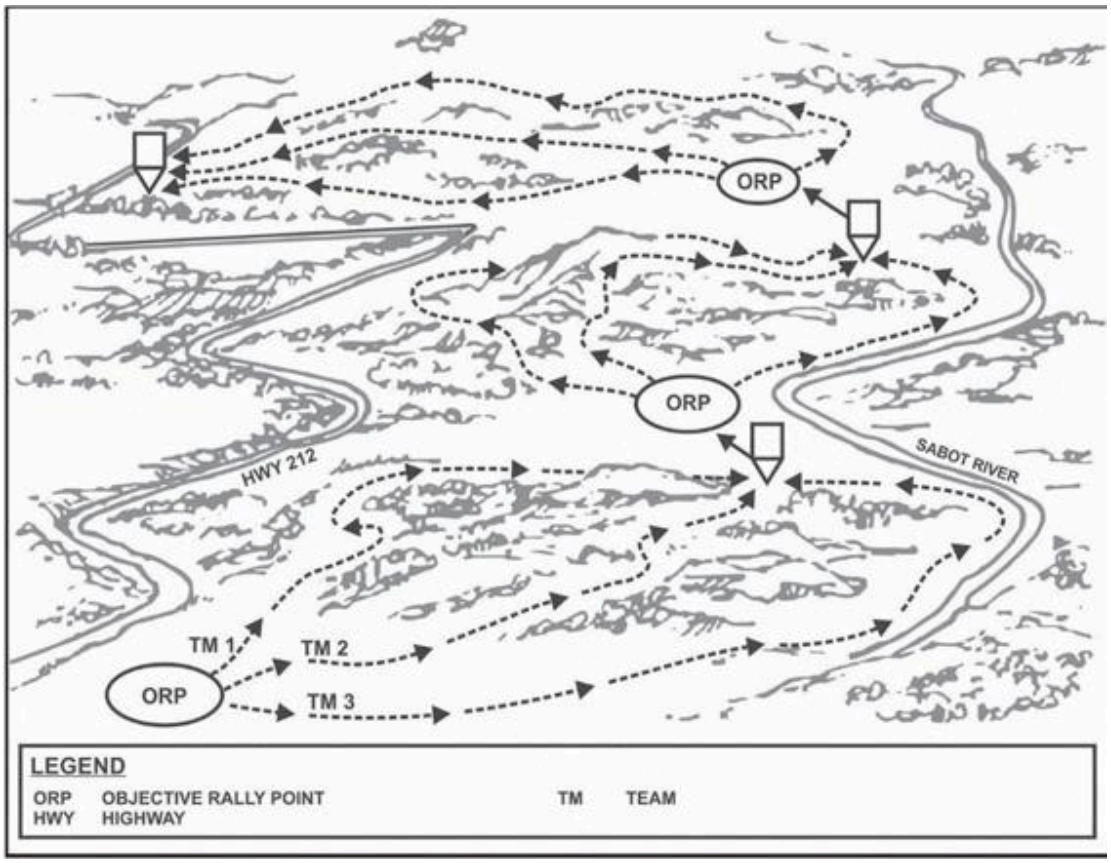


In order to use the fan method, the team leader selects several ORP/ORV's along the zone you want to conduct recon of. The team moves as a group to the first ORP. The team leader and his buddy (remember our buddy pairs) remain at the ORP site as a response force and the rest of the elements (whether you only have one buddy team left or more) move out and recon fan-shaped zones.

The fan shaped sections should overlap to ensure that you don't miss anything. If you have more than one team fanning out to recon the zone, the teams should be on adjacent fan sections so that they could support each other in the event of contact and to prevent your small teams from making contact in two different directions at the same time.

Once all of the fan sections have been patrolled, the team meets up and the ORP site and discusses what they found. The team then moves out to the next ORP to repeat it all over again.

Box Method



The box method is similar, but rather than fan-shaped slices, the team leader selects routes that form a box, and sends teams along them to a predetermined link-up site (ORP)on the far side of the sector. If you have a third element, they take a route through the center of the box.

Again, when the teams all link up, they share information with each other on what they found. The team compiles the information and briefs the teams on the next sector and their routes.

For our purposes, as small teams, these are the only two basic recon patrol types we will use. The “converging routes” and “successive sector” methods that some veterans will talk about are for larger formations than what we will be fielding and are just taking the fan method and super-imposing it onto the box method. If you know these two basic types, you can mix it up for small element recon patrolling however you would like using a combination of these two.

Bush War Tactics

In both the Malaysian Emergency and the Rhodesian Bush War, Commonwealth Special Air Service units employed some special tactics that may be helpful here.

The first principle was that responding to the opposition does not work. For us, that means that we cannot just sit inside our house, our bug out compound, or our farm and wait until the bad guys try to take things from us. That approach has never worked.

They found that recon patrolling and security patrolling must be ongoing and constant; otherwise, you risk letting the potential opposition have the upper hand. For our purposes, that means we must get out and patrol regularly, to prevent being surprised. We would much rather encounter potentially hostile groups far away from our supplies and homes.

The best tactic that was applied in both the Bush War and the Malaysian Emergency was to combine recon patrols with ambush operations (discussed in the next chapter). Setting up an ambush at the end of a patrol route will catch individuals and groups trying to avoid your recon patrols. Careful map studies can help you find areas where this will work. Areas like valleys and utility corridors lend themselves to these operations.

The other tactic that they used to defeat insurgents (very similar to defeating bandits in a WROL situation) was tactical tracking operations. These are far too complex to put in this volume (we may cover it in a later volume), but if you have an experienced hunter who knows how to track deer, tracking humans is even easier, albeit more dangerous.

Having one or two dedicated trackers that you can call up when you've found an abandoned camp can lead you to find potentially hostile groups hiding in your area. The Y and Half Y formations discussed earlier in the book come from tactical tracking training.

A common mutual defense tactic related to patrolling from the Bush War involved holding a daily radio check-in with neighboring farms or settlements. If one farm didn't check in, a patrol was dispatched to investigate. For our purposes, if we have partnered with neighboring groups, a similar arrangement could be set up.

Another option is to send out a small patrol very visibly from your main gate, while sending out another patrol secretly. While the small patrol carries out its mission, the second patrol follows them discreetly, trying to detect anyone else following that patrol. They could then ambush those hoping to ambush your patrol.

This is also fairly common in executive protection, but there we call it counter-surveillance, which you can carry out now in normal-times operations. Essentially, you have one person followed by a team of your

own surveillance operatives, trying to detect anyone running a surveillance. If you detect a surveillance being ran, it's time for anti-surveillance, which is whole other skill set. We run this often while gathering intelligence on opposition parties at protests, with the counter-surveillance element also serving as a rescue team if needed.

Urban Patrolling

While we highly recommend avoiding urban areas at all costs, we understand that some people just can't move out into a rural area and there may in fact be times that we will need to travel into an urban area for trade or some other purpose (like the hypothetical resistance to an opposing force). There are specific issues and problems that come up in urban patrolling that we don't have elsewhere.

For our purposes, we are going to make a nearly complete break with established Western military thought on this topic.

Let's be realistic: We do not have the resources to conduct the level of patrolling necessary in an urban environment. Now, this doesn't mean that if you are bound to are urban area, you have to give up on it. We're just not going to do it the same way as modern western militaries with highly visible presence patrols down the streets.

We don't have the manpower to engage every group of bandits and gang members in an urban area, so if we must deal with an urban area, we're going to do it SMARTLY.

As I've always said, being unseen is far better than being seen. For that reason, I recommend any physical movement through an urban area or scouting in an urban area be done in the hours of darkness, rather than daylight. Stealth is our friend.

If we must see what occurs in a particular location during daylight hours, then all movement to insert an observation post or surveillance team should be done during hours of darkness. You can leave a team in place all day, then extract them again the next night.

So, how does that look, for us? Let's begin with a four-person team to observe a checkpoint, as an example. For the federal agents among my readers: I'm talking about a Chinese checkpoint or a checkpoint by a bandit group in a city. The team would move from their secure location to their preselected hide site during the night. Once they've made sure that their site

was safe and secure, one buddy team becomes the security team and the other becomes the observation team. One person can pull security while their partner rests, and the same on the observation team. Once darkness falls again, the team sterilizes their hide site, and then moves out of the area. One caution though: Bring enough food and water for an extra day or two in case you get stuck inside the location. It's better to hide by day and leave another night than to try and sneak out after daylight.

Night observation devices can help here, but don't over-rely on them. Human beings have good night vision, especially when properly augmented by binoculars that gather light. Never use active IR illumination at night in an urban environment, as you will be broadcasting your location to others with night vision, and anyone else using night vision will not likely be friendly. You can detect security cameras with IR illuminators using your passive night vision as well (they look like flashlight beams).

If you are attending a meeting with a contact or other groups in an urban area, this same method is how you would insert an overwatch team to ensure your security. The overwatch team would be in place for hours and would be able to alert you if they saw the alleged allies setting up an ambush or other trap for you.

If you had no choice at all but to conduct urban patrolling during daylight hours (like if you lived openly in an urban area), I would recommend a more Gray-Man approach. Remember: When WROL happens, no one can truly be a "Gray Man", because anyone moving, especially with a backpack, means the potential for supplies to be looted.

By a more Gray-Man approach, I mean dress in outdoor clothing in earth tones, and carry only sidearms OPENLY. There are many options for long guns that fold up, or can be carried in a backpack, like pistol caliber carbines. Carrying a lot of long guns openly will make you look like a target worth following, because you have something to protect. Open carrying pistols will make you look like most others on the street in a WROL situation. I know a lot of guys talk about remaining concealed-carry during WROL, but that's dangerous. It's harder to draw and in a WROL context, it INVITES attack rather than preventing it. For example, if most people are open carrying, and you aren't, you are the most inviting target. In the current world, absolutely go with concealed carry. In a WROL situation, look like someone capable of self-defense and give yourself the

extra half-second. A half-second may very well be the difference between life and death.

My urban patrolling belt kit is slightly different from the standard listed in the Baseline Training Manal (TW-01). On the right side, I have a multitool on the front of the belt, near the buckle. The next item would be the sidearm; nothing should be in front of it to prevent interference with the draw. Behind that, I have a non-lethal option, usually an expandable baton. In the center back, where I can reach it with both hands, is my first aid kit. On the left rear, I have a flashlight pouch. Beside that I have a radio. Finally, I have three magazine pouches for a handgun, and one for a long gun.

It's different, because in an urban environment, I will likely have more sustainment nearby and can carry food and water in my backpack, as I won't need as much shelter material in my backpack.

Spread your team out and avoid walking like you are in a patrol formation. You can still hold a formation but make it loose and less obvious.

In the urban area, everyone must stay within view of each other. It's far too easy to get separated in a city. Another risk in the urban environment is that we have to pay attention to threats above and below us. Watch elevated windows and roof tops, while also looking for missing manhole covers or catch basin grates that indicate people may be moving underground.

Once again, from experience, urban combat is manpower and supply intensive. You are there to SCOUT, not fight.

Another risk inherent in urban patrolling is getting sucked into someone else's fight. If you are patrolling and conflict breaks out between two groups, remember that this isn't a movie, and you aren't Mad Max. Without understanding the situation, you risk getting drawn into something and fighting both parties. A better stance is to occupy the nearest structure, set up a perimeter, and just watch. It's tough to watch human suffering occur in front of you and not do something about it, but at times, nothing is the right thing to do. You have a bigger purpose and others are counting on you. You also risk coming to the aid of what you thought were victims, but actually turn out to be the last survivors of a bandit group that had just victimized someone else. Unless you fully understand what is happening, watching and observing is the best course of action. Don't compromise your position unless you absolutely must.

Forage Patrols

Back in 1700s-1800s, military units sent out forage patrols to look for food and supplies. You will do these as well, but in all reality, every patrol you send out, no matter what their purpose, will also forage as they go. Essentially, any usable supplies or gear should be picked up whenever you find it. In a WROL situation, unattended means abandoned. You can carry small, collapsible bags or duffels in your patrol bag for this purpose. In the event a particularly large stash is found, you could bury it and mark the location for later retrieval.

Make it a standing SOP that your personnel are NEVER to leave operable arms and ammunition if they find them. Either immediately pick them up, or cache them for later pickup. You may need spare parts, need to arm new members, arm a neighboring group, or trade for food or medical supplies.

If sending out a team to forage, send a minimum of four people, two for security and two to gather whatever you are foraging. Once their bags are full, switch roles.

Checking buildings for supplies to be foraged, like a looted store, requires two four-person teams. One team sets up a security overwatch position in a covered and concealed location where they can see the building. The second team advances to the building, where one buddy team provides close-in security, and the second buddy team searches the building. The team then re-unites and moves out to rejoin the overwatch team, without masking the overwatch team’s fires.

Training Standard

- List the 4 fundamentals of reconnaissance, using the GATE acronym.
- List the 3 main types of recon patrols.
- Explain how recon patrols are organized.
- Explain what a Rally Point and an Objective Rally Point are.
- Describe what an Area Recon is.
- Explain what a GOTWA plan is.
- Describe what a cloverleaf pattern area recon is.
- Describe what a Route Recon is.
- List at least 4 danger areas to identify on a route recon.
- Describe what a Zone Recon is.
- List 2 types of Zone Recon.
- List at least 3 principles of urban patrolling in a WROL environment.
- Explain what a forage patrol is.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 7

Ambush Operations

"Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on the alert."
Joshua 8:4

When Joshua and his forces were attacked by a larger enemy, God ordered Joshua to set an ambush. The story of the Battle of Ai in Joshua 8 is a pretty good story, and I reference it here to tell you that, according to God, there is nothing dishonorable in ambushing your foes in combat. In fact, God ordered several ambushes in the Old Testament.

Now, we certainly aren't looking for a fight and we don't envision engaging in major combat operations. Many of you might even question why we are taking about ambushes at all if we are interested in self-defense. We are discussing them because in a WROL situation, pre-emptive community self-defense will be a real thing.

If you receive word that a group of bandits is in the area attacking compounds and farms, killing, stealing, and raping as they go, which do you think is the best option; sitting and waiting for them to attack you at your front door or identifying their route via your recon patrols and setting an ambush to fight them far away from your protected supplies and families? That's why we are going to learn the skills.

It's a part of our history, and I don't just mean ancient Joshua. In colonial America, when a settlement learned of bandits, Native American raiding parties, or forces from other colonial powers operating in an area, the locals went into action. The women and children were all moved to one location and guarded. A force was then dispatched to locate and destroy, usually by ambush, the opposition. This is where the famed Roger's Rangers got their start. They were a private militia used to protect local settlements.

Again, we are talking about a complete WROL situation. There is no one to call for help. There is no one to follow up and prosecute the lawbreakers. Collective community self-defense is the answer, and it's best done pre-emptively.

According to Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-11.3, *Scouting & Patrolling:*

An ambush is a surprise attack from a concealed position upon a moving or temporarily halted target. It is one of the oldest and most effective types of

military actions.

In the context of civilian resistance to an invasion or tyranny, ambushes are best executed against convoys and resupply columns, rather than combat forces. But, of course, we aren't talking about those operations at all, are we?

There are two basic types of ambushes for our purposes. The first is the deliberate ambush, where we are planning on ambushing a hostile party at a location that we are fairly sure they will be at. The second is the hasty ambush, where you happen across a hostile party and see them first, giving you the opportunity to set up a very basic ambush. A hasty ambush is more than a "chance contact", which is both parties seeing each other at the same time.

Deliberate Ambush

As we discussed before, a deliberate ambush is one that you planned. An ambush requires more personnel than the recon patrols, which were 4 to 8 people. An ambush should be 8 to 12 people, with 12 being ideal for our purposes. Larger targets require larger forces, but the principles are the same, regardless of the size. A team of 12 lets us use 4 people for the security teams and 8 to launch the actual ambush.

Among deliberate ambushes, there are two sub-types. A point ambush is where we the ambush is conducted at one particular kill zone that the hostile party is expected to pass through. An area ambush has the team watching two or more kill zones, in case the party passes through one of them. As you might imagine, an area ambush requires even more personnel. For the record, you CAN pull off an ambush of a small target with only 4 people, but it is far from ideal. Build a tribe.

There are several factors to consider when selecting a position to launch an ambush, in order to make the ambush more effective and to prevent meaningful resistance. Look for the following factors:

- Any area than canalizes the hostile party, forcing them to stay in the killing zone. Cliffs, steep hills, streams, and other features allow this.
- A location that allows you to set the ambush without crossing or setting foot in the kill zone.
- Offers you good cover and concealment, along with good observation and fields of fire (Remember KOCOA).

- Allows the team to break contact back to the ORP safely via covered and concealed routes.

When you've selected the ambush site, select an ORP that offers cover and concealment, again one terrain feature away. You're going to leave your rucks/backpacks there and you might need to stop there to consolidate and treat any wounded, so it needs to be defendable.

We're going to depart a bit from published military doctrine and adopt some unofficial USMC wisdom. Rather than leaving a security team at the ORP, we're going to leave it empty. Leaving people there wastes manpower we can't spare, and they can't support our ambush withdrawal from there, so use them on the ambush itself instead.

The basic elements of any ambush are the assault element and the security elements. The assault element is the group that does the actual ambush. The security elements are one or two people sent out on each end to watch for the hostile force before the ambush and to watch for hostile reinforcements after the ambush. The security elements are put in place first and withdrawn last.

When occupying the ambush position, whichever layout you chose, the security elements move into position first. Once they are in place, the remainder of the ambush adopts their positions.

Traditional military doctrine would have you emplace the machine guns right after the security teams, but since we are talking about civilian self-defense, we aren't likely to have any at the outset of any issues. Should your group "acquire" some, they would be placed wherever they offer the best coverage of the ambush kill zone.

Everyone sets up their own covered and concealed position to overwatch the kill zone. Basic improvements should immediately be made, like scraping out a "Skirmishers Trench" or hasty fighting position to lay behind and camouflaging your position. Remove anything blocking your field of fire but be careful not to over clear.

No one from the ambush party should enter the kill zone, as you don't want to leave signs that another group is nearby. If members must cross the trail or road, they should do so far from the actual kill zone.

Ambushes, not matter what type, are initiated by the team leader firing the most effective weapon at your disposal. Since we won't (likely) have grenade launchers, machine guns, or rockets, this will most likely mean

triggering the ambush by firing a precision rifle. Everyone in the ambush party should know the signal to begin firing and to end firing.
Generally, the ambush party will fire until the hostile party is destroyed or fleeing the field (try not to allow that). The leader should have a prearranged signal for the party to stop firing as well.
While civilians defending a local area are not bound by the Geneva or Hague conventions, we can't toss aside all morality. Decide ahead of time how to handle people who surrender. The best idea is to completely disarm them, gather what intelligence you can from them, then march them away unarmed with a warning to never come back. If there is semi-functioning law enforcement, like a county sheriff, you can use the common law concept of citizen's arrest and deliver the hostile party to the sheriff and let him decide what to do, but there are risks in that. Make your own decisions ahead of time. You can't realistically feed, house, and guard prisoners.
It is entirely possible that a hostile party, especially state-sponsored ones (those Chinese troops, right?), might successfully launch a counterattack. World militaries spend a lot of time on "react to ambush" drills and many of them work. If the leader decides that the ambush may be overrun, he needs to have a prearranged signal for everyone to fall back by buddy pair fire and movement (one shoots, one moves, then switch) to the ORP. Once in the ORP, everyone grabs their ruck/backpack and the leader issues an order on how far to move and where; for example, "6 o'clock, 500 meters" and the whole team immediately moves, executing the break contact drill if still under pressure.
If the ambush is successful, and the hostile force is either destroyed or has fled, a pre-determined part of the ambush party, called the "search team", will advance down into the kill zone, while the rest of the party provides overwatch. The search team will gather weapons, ammunition, radios, maps, medical supplies, notes, and any usable supplies quickly, and fall back immediately to the ambush position, and then continue to the ORP. Once they are back at the ORP, the covering team falls back, followed by the security teams.
The team then consolidates, distributes the captured gear among the team to be carried back, and starts heading back to the secure location.

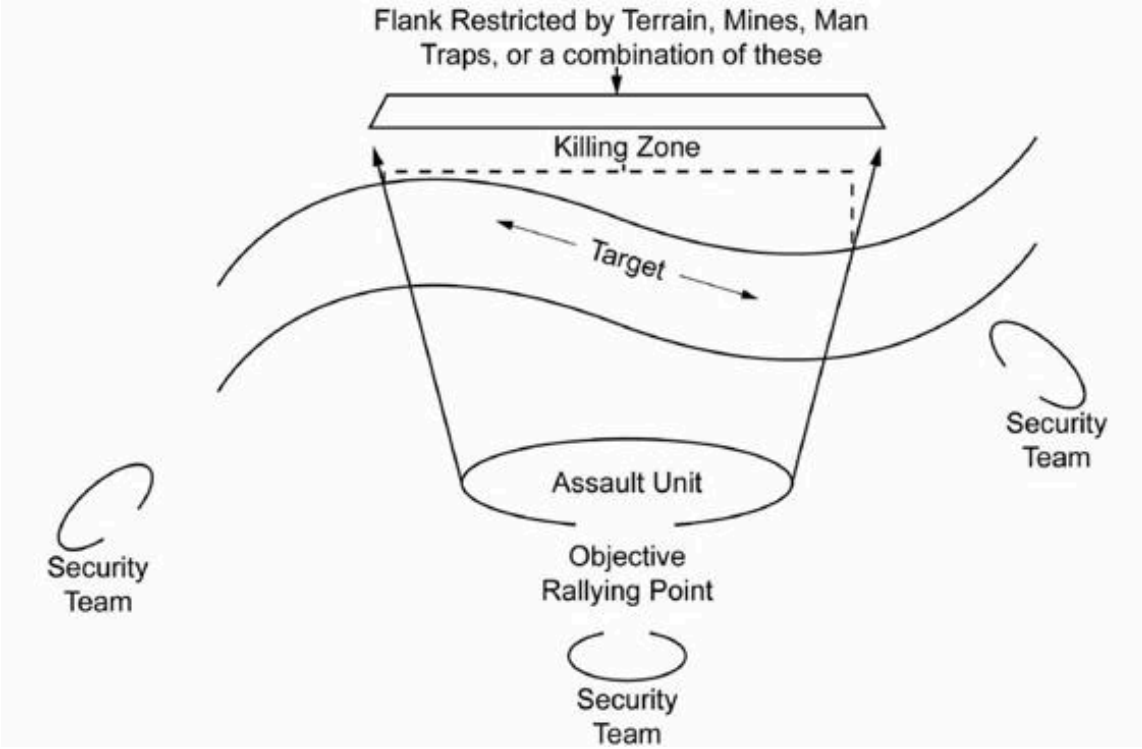
Ambush Formations

Now that we know the basic progression of ambush operations, let's talk about ambush formations.

But first, I’m going to burst everyone’s bubble. I know how cool it is on the internet to talk about “L-Shaped Ambushes” and all the other fancy letter shapes, but real life must intrude. Time for some tough love and reality.
The L-Shaped ambush was created during the Vietnam War for cutting off troops and trying to catch them with fire from two directions. The truth is that it caused a LOT of friendly fire casualties in the dense jungle. As long as both sides fire straight ahead with no deviation, it works, but real life doesn’t work that way; people being shot at move, and people shooting at them follow them with their muzzle. It’s dangerous for us with limited manpower. We can’t call up a reserve unit to replace three of our people.
The second problem is that most of these niche formations rely on the ability to use machine guns in key locations to make them work. You likely won’t have that.
The third problem is manpower. These formations assume a US/UK squad or section of 8-13 personnel or up to a platoon of 30-40, never less. You don’t have as many people as they might.
Nevertheless, in the interest of completeness, and to allow us all to sound cool on the internet and to impress our friends with our martial knowledge, we will include them all here.
Remember though, to first master completely the linear ambush. We’re going to discuss two variations of it, the textbook example, and the unofficial USMC Jungle Warfare School version, which is the most likely one you’ll use. That one has the security elements as part of the ambush line, rather than a long distance out. This way, no one gets lost, they can support each other, and you can pull it off with less people.
Another caution about the more esoteric ambush variations is that they are complex. The simplest option (USMC Jungle Variant linear ambush) is usually the best. The more people put in more locations related to each other, the greater your risk of a friendly fire incident.
This becomes even more important when Sgt. Murphy shows up. For you non-veterans, this is a reference to Murphy’s Law that whatever can go wrong, will. If you have set up an elaborate ambush, but your opposition comes up a different trail, how can you adjust quickly and silently? If you were in the simplified linear ambush, it’s as easy as turning around. In something more complex, like the over-romanticized L ambush, it’s virtually impossible to adjust to changing circumstances.

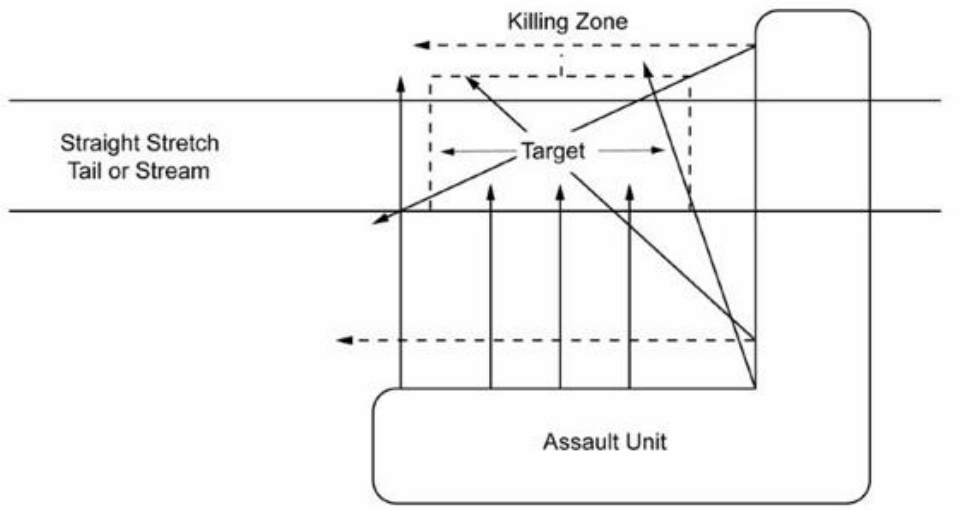
This same thing holds true if you are in some fancy ambush formation and the hostile party begins to over-run your position. Where does everyone fall back to, and who provides support?
All of these things point to the same maxim, the simplest option, the simplified linear ambush, is the safest and most adaptable.

Linear Ambush

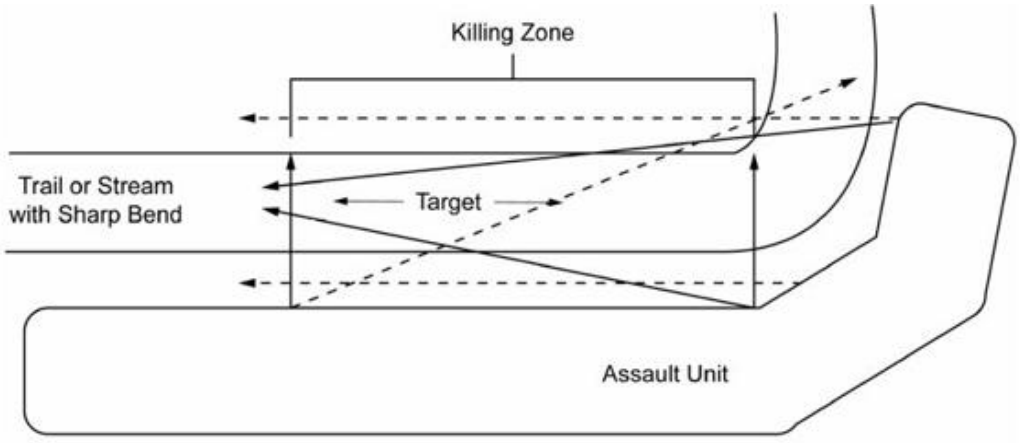


Just like it sounds, the linear ambush is setting up online, facing the kill zone. In this example, it shows a security team left in the ORP, which we may not have the personnel for. In the traditional linear ambush, the security teams are 50-70 meters out on the flanks. For the simplified linear ambush, we simply pull those security elements right into the ambush formation, they are just oriented towards the flanks.
This formation allows you to expose the target to a lot of flanking fire (from the side) to overwhelm an opponent.
The linear formation does limit the size of the kill zone that you cover, based on the number of people in your team. It's also easier to counter-attack because the entire ambush force is in one place.

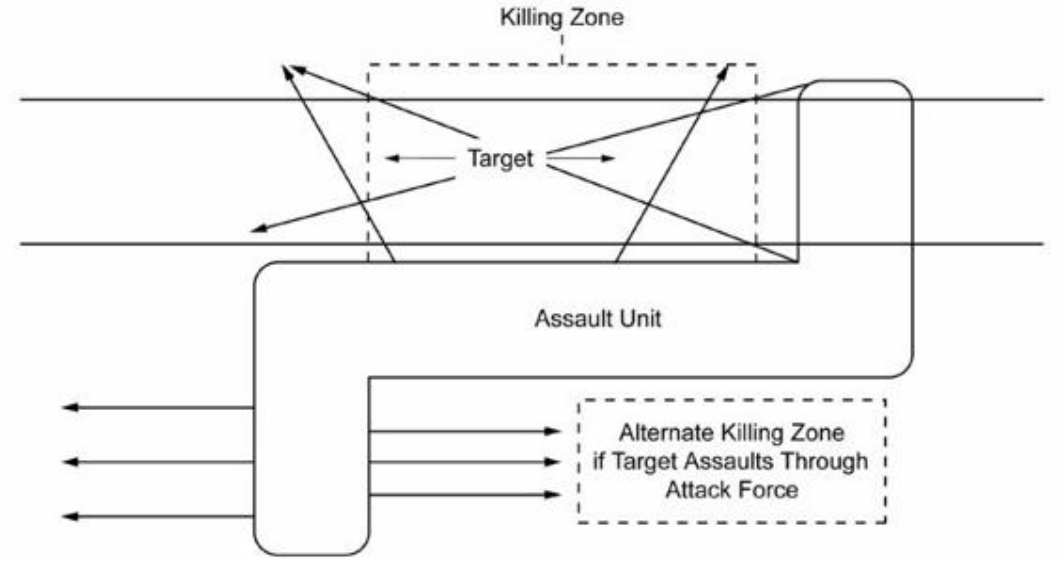
L – Shaped Ambush



The L Shaped Ambush formation adds a support element at a right angle to the assault element. Your teams need to know the limits for shifting their aim to keep from hitting your personnel on the other side of the L.
This formation allows you good flanking fire from the assault element, while also allowing “enfilade” fire from your support section. Enfilade fire means down the length of the target. If you have belt fed weapons, they should be on the short leg to enable this.
This is a variation for a bend in a trail or stream:



Z-Shaped Ambush

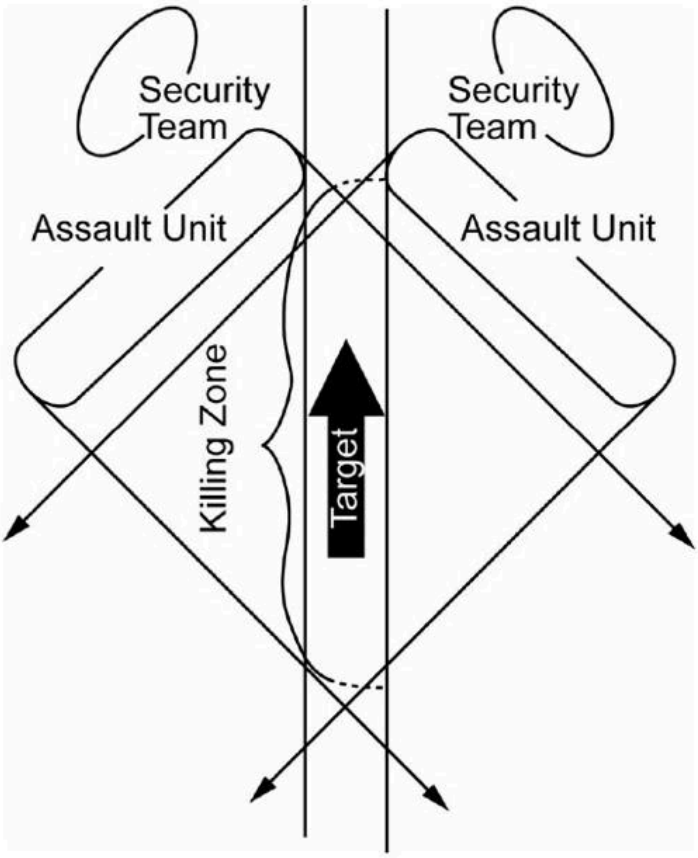


The Z-Shaped Ambush is an L-Shaped Ambush with an extra end. This end prevents the ambush party from being surprised. It also can be used to spring a second ambush if the hostile force successfully repels and overruns the original long side (assault element).

The formation provides the same benefits as the L-Shaped Ambush. Additionally, the extra end can maneuver to seal off the target by closing the other end of the kill zone but be aware of the cross-fire risks.

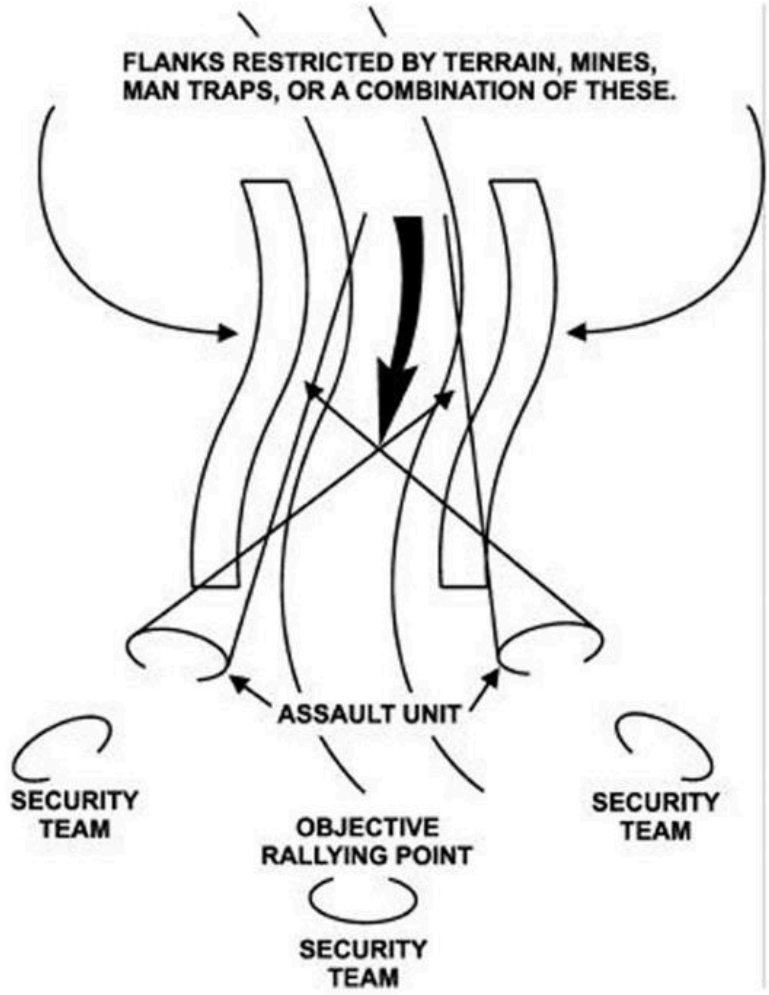
The formation is very complex and should only be used if you anticipate the need to withdraw your assault section under hostile pressure past the extra end to re-ambush a larger force.

V-Shaped Ambush



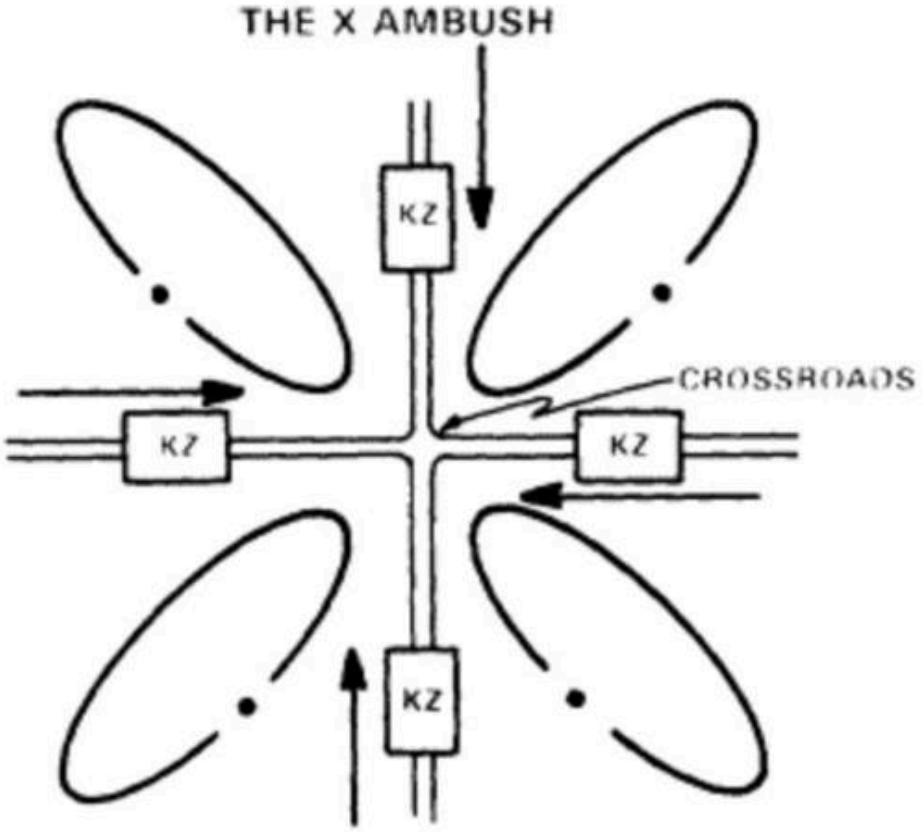
In the V-Shaped Ambush, both sides of the kill zone are used. Half of the assault section is on either side of the road, and oriented at an angle in the expected direction that the hostile party will approach from. Make sure that everyone understands the limits of their sector to prevent friendly fire. This formation allows flanking enfilade fire on both sides and limits the ability of the enemy to counterattack your ambush through dispersion on both sides of the path.

T-Shaped Ambush



The T-Shaped Ambush is used when the hostile party must come out of or across restrictive terrain, like a ravine or a bridge, or maybe even a tunnel. The ambush team spreads itself across the path that the hostile party must take and can therefore engage the whole target with enfilade fire.
The Ukrainian Marines have been making good use of the T-Shaped ambush in striking Russian and Separatist Militia forces in the Russo-Ukrainian War. As the Russian column gets to the near side of the bridge, the Ukrainians are hammering them with enfilade fire, and they can't get off the bridges.

X – Shaped Ambush



If you plan on conducting an ambush of opportunity on an intersection, the X-Shaped Ambush is a great way to cover all four directions. It is simply putting two V-Shaped Ambushes back-to-back.

Any force that approaches the intersection from any direction will have to pass through a V-Shaped ambush, no matter what. In order to cover all the directions, have each team member face the opposite direction until a target is found approaching.

Obviously, this ambush formation requires more manpower than the others.

Area Ambushes

An area ambush is when you aren't sure exactly where the hostile party will pass, but you know they will be in the area. Rather than setting up on a specific trail or road, you set up 3 or 4 small teams all facing the center of the area. These teams are all about 300 meters/330 yards apart, for safety reasons.

Each team sets themselves up in covered and concealed positions to wait for the hostile party to enter the ambush zone.

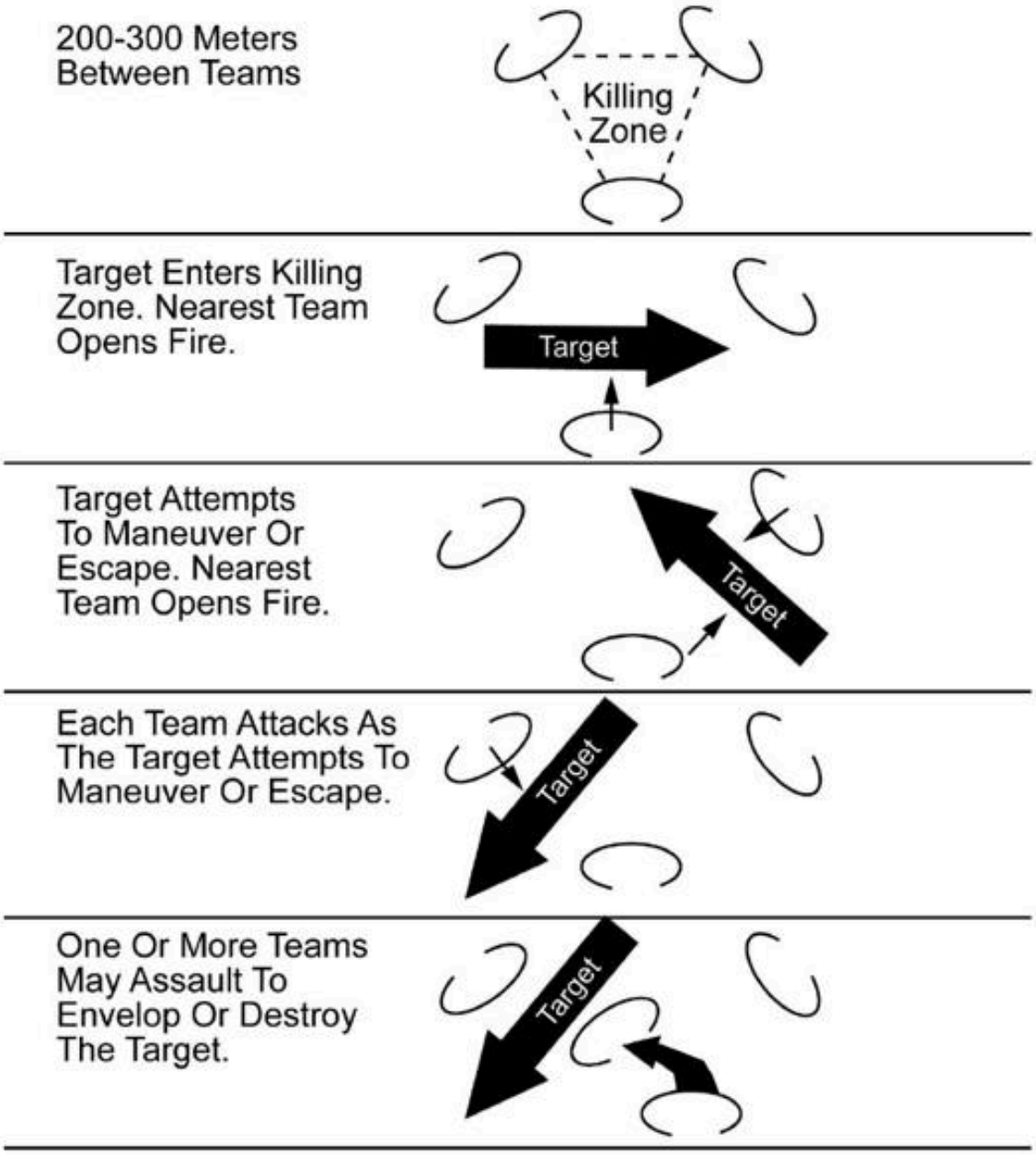
Once the hostile party enters the zone, the nearest ambush opens fire. As the hostile party flees the first ambush, they will pass another team. That team then also ambushes the hostile party, forcing them to flee once more, away from both groups that ambushed them and into the third group. As that group launches its ambush, another ambush team assaults into their positions, destroying the remnants.

The graphics that follow show the two formations for this: the Triangle and the Box. As you can see, the area ambush is very effective in harassing and destroying a larger hostile party.

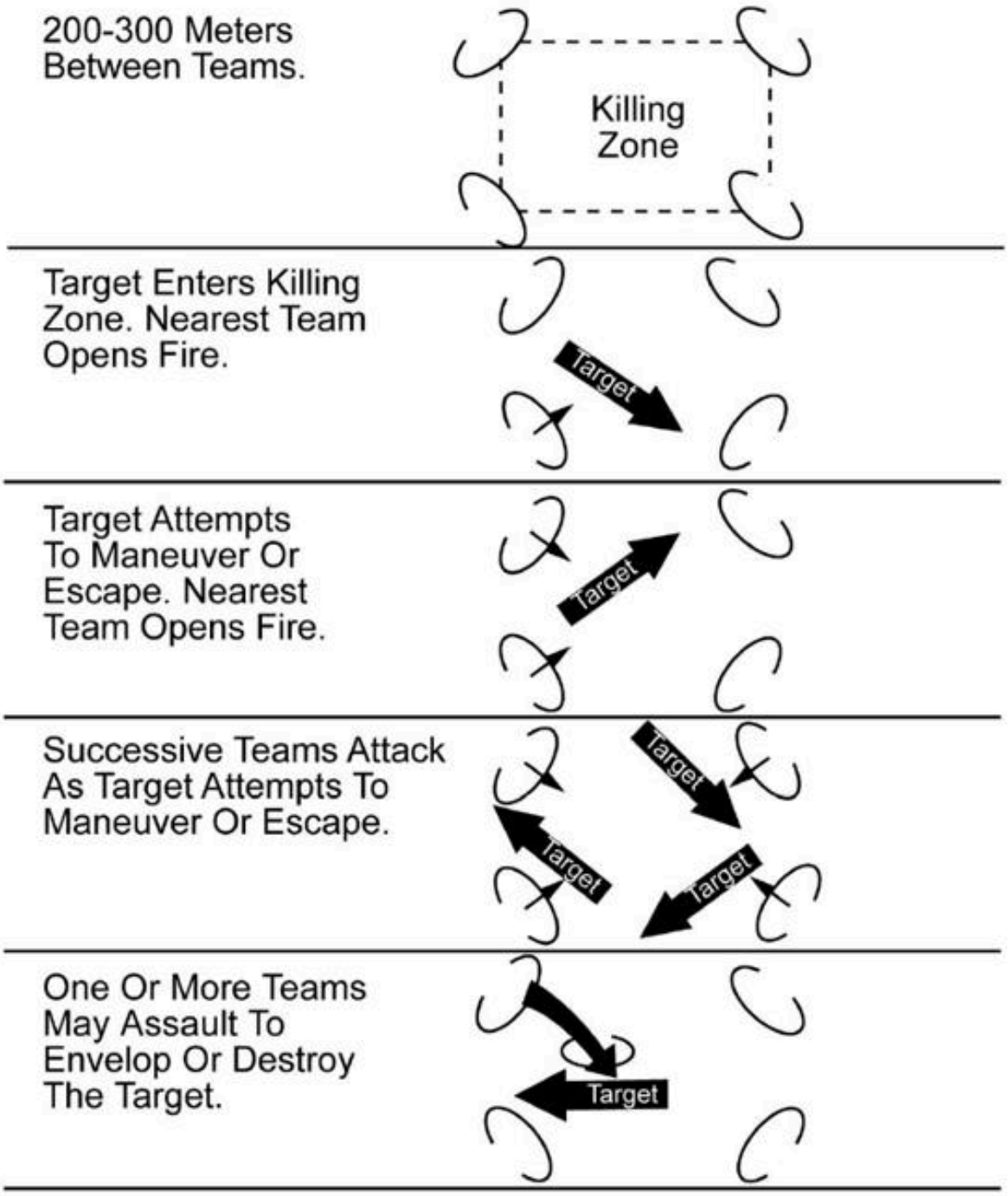
The biggest factor against the area ambush is the number of people needed, but if you are cooperating with a neighboring group, you might find enough people to pull this off.

The teams continue to fire on the target until its strength is degraded enough to fix it in place and overrun it by either attacking through or assaulting through as discussed earlier.

The Triangle Area Ambush



The Box Area Ambush



The Hasty Ambush

A hasty ambush is put in place when you see or hear a potential target approaching. It can also be put in place any time that you want to stop and check to see if you are being followed by a hostile party.

When the leader decides to set up a hasty ambush, he can either radio that information or give the accepted hand-and-arm signal for a hasty ambush (raising the fist on the side you want the ambush on to shoulder level and punching out in the direction you want the ambush set up in). When ordered or signaled, the patrol quickly and quietly takes up the best prone covered-and-concealed position that they can find in a linear formation.

The ambush is triggered on the command of the patrol leader, or when someone sees that the hasty ambush has been detected.

A hasty ambush is good thing to set up and run for 45-60 minutes before occupying an overnight site, to check and see if you are being followed.

Ambush Discipline

Once the team members are all in position, they must stay in position with as little movement as possible for as long as needed.

Personnel will need to ignore bug bites, boredom, restlessness, bodily functions, and other issues to remain undetected. The ambush can take a long time. Personnel must be disciplined enough to be patient.

Another key piece of ambush discipline is the ability to remain motionless while the target approaches and trusting in your leaders to decide when (or whether) to trigger the ambush. If an opposing force is larger than expected, letting them pass by may be the best thing to do.

Tug Ropes

A lesson learned is to run ropes (use para-cord) from the team leader out to the flank security elements. In this way, silent communications can be achieved. If the flank elements see the opposition approaching, they can pull on the tug ropes, alerting the team leader. If the team leader wants the flank elements to return, he can tug on the ropes to send that signal.

Training Standard

- Define what an ambush is.
- Describe the difference between a hasty and a deliberate ambush.
- List some factors in selecting an ambush position.
- Demonstrate occupying an ambush position.
- Describe a Linear Ambush and the USMC Jungle Variant.
- List at least 3 other ambush formations and describe them.
- Explain what an area ambush is and list the two formations of it.
- Describe a hasty ambush.
- Explain what a tug rope is and how to use it.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 8

Raid Operations

“Bandits will raid Gad,
but Gad will raid them back.”
Genesis 49:19

I was hesitant to even include this chapter because I don’t think that running combat operations is our goal, and that we will only be running them in response to other people attacking us. I did what I always do when I struggle with an issue, I consulted the Ultimate Tactical Handbook. In the very first book of the Bible, there is the above verse that explains exactly why we should learn to how to conduct raids. Bandits will raid us, and we need to be able to raid them right back.

With that in mind, I’ll present a few ideas of why we need the skill set before getting into the skill.

One of your patrols comes across a destroyed campsite and it’s obvious that the two dead people were attacked by a larger party. Your patrol begins tracking the attackers and locates their campsite a couple of miles away. There is no doubt these are bad folks out harming others. A raid while they are sleeping can protect a much larger community from any further attacks.

A group of civilian refugees approaches your traffic control point at the edge of your community and reports that a group of people is running a roadblock from a barn next to the road and is extorting supplies from people passing by. They report that one man who resisted was killed.

One night, your perimeter observation post comes under attack, but repels the probe. The next morning, your Quick Reaction Force tracks the attackers to a small camp in the woods nearby.

Each of these situations is a highly plausible WROL scenario. Having basic raid skills will enable you to proactively handle these situations for community self-defense.

An added bonus is that once you know how to conduct a raid, which is nothing more than a squad attack with a withdrawal plan, you can use the same process to safely investigate things without actually launching an attack. For example, if you are moving from your home to a bug out location and your group comes across an abandoned cabin, you can apply the basic raid process to set up a support position to cover the approach of

your assault element and investigate the cabin without ever firing a round, just using the process to provide cover and safe overwatch.

Our goal is not to become an Ultra-Tacticool-Ranger ™, but to learn how to handle the situation should it arise.

From a moral standpoint, the verse above explains the moral justification for conducting a raid. Those who raid others have earned their fate. You aren't the one attacking innocent people, the bad guys are. You are just resolving the situation to protect the community at large. From a larger perspective, word will get out that your community doesn't tolerate that kind of behavior, and you will be safer.

That having been said, I'll issue my standard disclaimer: These skills are for when there is a complete breakdown of law and order and there is no law enforcement agency coming to help. Also, should resistance to an occupier (foreign or domestic) become necessary, these skills can be applied.

According to the US Marine Corps, in Marine Corps Reference Publication 3-30.1, *Raid Operations*:

A raid is an operation, usually small scale, involving a swift penetration of hostile territory to secure information, confuse the enemy, or to destroy his installations. It ends with a planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission.

While raid tactics are as old as humanity, as evidenced by the Bible reference above, much of the current Western Military doctrine related to raids comes from the teaching of an eccentric British General officer named Orde Wingate. His teachings affected so many different nations, that in Israel, the leading Krav Maga organization is called the Wingate Institute, he is hailed as a national hero in Ethiopia, and the Indonesians called their revolutionary tactics against the Dutch "Wingate tactics". He modernized ambush and raid tactics while fighting the Japanese in Burma and India. His had this to say about raids:

"Nothing is so devastating as to pounce upon the enemy in the dark, smite him hip and thigh, and vanish silently into the night."

Brigadier Orde Charles Wingate

Burma,1943

Brigadier Wingate's comment illustrates the fundamentals of the raid perfectly: Get into position without being detected, use overwhelming force and surprise to seize the objective, and then quickly and quietly withdraw without becoming decisively engaged.

Raid Patrol Size

Compared to other patrols, a raid patrol is the largest. You probably need at a minimum four 4-person teams, and preferably more. This is why you need to learn about cooperative operations as described in TW-03, Defensive Operations.

You need personnel for a security element, a support element, and the assault element.

Security Element

The first element to put in place in a raid is the security element. The security elements should be one or two people placed along the most likely avenue of approach or escape from the location. This prevents anyone from escaping and gives you early warning of any support groups coming to help the bad guys.

When a police department plans a raid, they call this the “outer perimeter” and they put people at the road intersections leading away. The principle is the same.

Support Element

This is your cover team. It’s place where it can provide the most effect fire coverage of the target location. This can be one or two 4-person teams. They are deployed on a line facing the objective. We won’t have any crew served weapons, but if we did (wink-wink) you would place them here. You should always designate one person to turn around and cover the rear, to protect the support element from anyone approaching. The people on each end of the line should be reminded to cover the flanks as well, also to prevent surprise.

Each person gets into the prone position in the best covered and concealed position that they can find. Once each person gets in place, they should visualize how they will leave undetected after the raid or if a counterattack is made.

The role of the support element is to engage the target location to keep their attention focused on the wrong direction as the assault element makes their assault. The support element needs to know when to shift their aim or stop firing as the assault element enters the target location to prevent friendly fire casualties. This can be via radio, visual signal, or a pre-planned time. Sometimes, like in the example above of the abandoned cabin, the support element might not fire at all, unless someone fires on the assault element. The best raid is one in which no rounds are fired at all.

In the case of a location where everyone appears to be sleeping, it might be best to use the same approach, with the support element only firing if the assault element is detected. If the assault element isn't detected, the support element would only fire on opposition trying to leave the site.
Every raid operation is different, and you will need to establish the roles of each one in the planning session.

Assault Element

The assault element is exactly what it sounds like, the team that assaults the objective. Typically, the assault element is smaller than or the same size as the support element. For our purposes, it's probably just one 4-person team, with 2 teams in the support element, and one team as the security element.
The assault element is the last element put in place. After the security element is set, and then the support element sets up their line, the assault element moves via a covered and concealed route (preferably keeping a terrain feature like a hill or city block between them and the target) to a spot at a 90 degree angle to the assault element. We call this an "attack position". Once there, they spread out on line and take a knee, waiting for the signal to advance.
Before the team begins an attack, the leader will need to have established a "limit of advance", which is the farthest point which the assault team will move. The team will NOT pursue anyone leaving the site; that's what the support and security elements are for. The limit of advance is again to prevent friendly fire incidents and spreading your force too thin.
If the plan was for the support element to engage the target location first, the assault element waits for that fire to begin before moving. They use the distraction caused by the support element as cover to quickly move right onto the objective.
If the plan was for a stealth approach, the assault team leader radios the overall leader that he is moving and the assault element then moves onto the objective.
Once on the objective, the assault element moves across the objective using either the Fight Through or Assault Through methods discussed in the Basic Squad Tactics chapter. They stop when they reach the limit of advance and have secured the objective.

Note: This doesn't mean that they ever have to fire their weapons. Some raids are carried out without resistance, or the site is empty. The ultimate goal is to conduct the raid and then withdraw. We want to draw as little attention as necessary.

Exploitation

Once the objective is secured, the assault team conducts a quick exploitation of the site. For our purposes of civilian self-defense, this means securing any operable arms and ammunition to prevent them from falling into bad hands and gathering both supplies and any intelligence information on site.

First, let's talk arms and ammunition. You may have all the arms you need, but ammunition is always needed. If you just went to the trouble and risk to eliminate a band of bandits, it does you no good to leave behind arms that a new band could use. They can also be used as spares or for trade. As far worrying about laws, war materiel has been fair game since men first started swinging sticks at each other and the Bible also mentions taking your enemies arms.

On the topic of supplies, I know that many of you might find this to be stealing. If we are truly raiding bandits, it's actually recovering stolen property and putting it to good use in the community. You didn't set out to steal from others and it is wasteful to not gather every usable supply and convert it to use for long term survival.

It's even approved in the Ultimate Tactical Handbook:

And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them, declares the Sovereign Lord.

Ezekiel 39:10b

The final thing is intelligence information. Look for and gather up any maps, notebooks, or radios that they have. Don't adjust anything on the radios until you've returned to your own secure location, where you can write down all the frequencies programmed in. Once back at your secure location, turn over the radios and any written materials to be analyzed by your intelligence team.

Any good field gear should be taken for your team's use as well like good packs, body armor, helmets, optics, etc. Remember, they are the bad guys, and you need the supplies for long term survival. Battlefield pickup is a long-established method of supply.

Withdrawal

Once the exploitation is complete, the assault team withdraws past the support element to the ORP. Next, the support element withdraws to the ORP, and then finally the security element.
At the ORP, the leader checks on everyone, the wounded are treated, and the exploited material is spread around for carrying back to your base or secure location. The leader then moves the team out along the planned withdrawal route.

Casualties

A quick note about casualties during a raid. There is no medicine while fighting. Casualties are expected to treat their own injuries, defend themselves until the fight is over, and to contribute to winning the fight if they are able.
After the objective is secured, immediate aid can be started, but true stabilization and treatment doesn't begin until everyone is in the ORP. This may mean that a critical casualty is moved before stabilization, but it's for the greater good.
If the hostile element had support nearby and they heard the assault, that support group is going to attack the last known location that their friends were at. If you are still there focused on treating Johnny's sucking chest wound, you will experience more casualties.
It is better for all if you first withdraw to the ORP, then treat any wounded, including serious injuries. It sucks, but that is the nature of combat.

Training Standard

- Define what a raid is.
- Explain why we need to know how to conduct a raid.
- Explain the duties of the security element.
- Explain the duties of the support element.
- Explain the duties of the assault element.
- Explain the sequence of events in a raid.
- Describe what exploitation is and what kinds of items to secure.
- Explain casualty treatment during a raid operation.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 9

Patrol Harbors/Bases

“For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.”
Psalm 27:5

When conducting patrols, our goal is to be undetected and hidden. Some patrols, whether by design or by what happens during them, will require us to stay out overnight or for a few nights. When this happens, we establish a patrol base, rather than a camp.

In TW-02, Fieldcraft, I explained that we need to remove the word “camp” from our lexicon, because to us in the Western World, it denotes a fun and relaxed atmosphere with a roaring fire. In a WROL situation, that can get you killed.

We did cover this skill in both TW-02 and TW-03, but we’re going to build some more advanced aspects into it here.

First, I want to point out terminology, because just like the word camp, words can impact our thinking and behavior. Calling it a “patrol base” denotes a secure and safe location where we will be for days. I prefer the Commonwealth Forces (UK/CAN/AUS) term of “patrol harbor”. A harbor is a temporary location that a ship pulls into during dangerous weather for protection. The word harbor denotes a temporary occupation, rather than longer term like “base”. Harbor, unlike base, also denotes that there is an element of danger nearby, which keeps us in the right mindset.

Now, since we want to sound cool on Twitter, and sound like we are a top-tier operator, US special operations forces also call this a “Remain Overnight” or RON site. The even more “Tacti-Cool” people always use British terms, so drop the term “Lay Up Point” or LUP and everyone will know you are the most elite.

The point is that all these ultra-cool-guy phrases can be summed up under the term patrol harbor. You aren’t actually establishing a base to patrol from, you are harboring there for the night (or day if you are only moving at night).

Let’s review our acronym for selecting a patrol harbor site:

B	Blends in

L	Low silhouette
I	Irregular shape
S	Small
S	Secluded

Your site should also be at least 200 meters from any trail, road, stream or other natural line of drift where humans might travel. We want to minimize the chance that someone will just stumble into your patrol harbor.

Select rough or thickly vegetated terrain that would be hard for anyone approaching to traverse without making noise. An elevated position is best but remember to not silhouette yourselves by being on the very top of a hill or ridgeline.

Avoid obvious places and clearings.

I know how much you love the cool guy sounding acronyms, so here is another to help you in selecting a patrol harbor location.

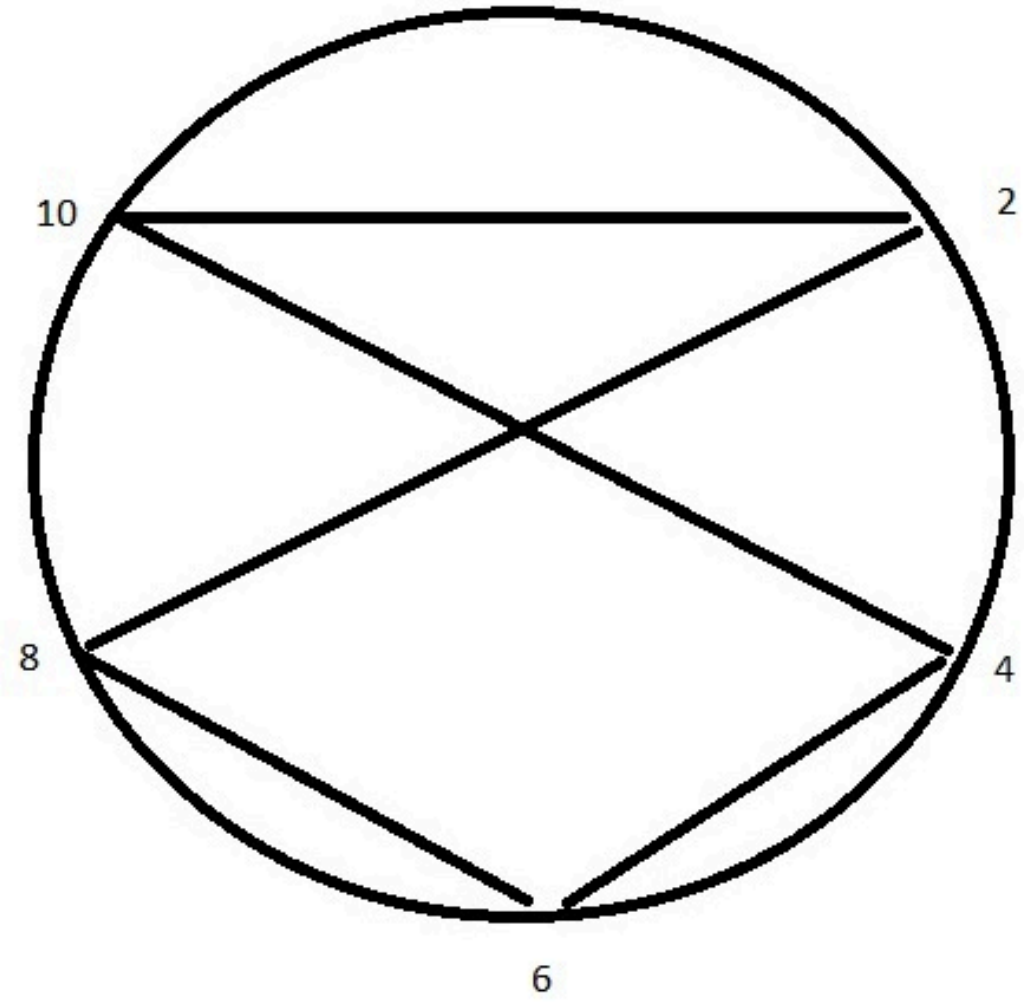
C	Cover & concealment
O	Off natural lines of drift
O	Out of sight and sound of any objective areas
L	Large enough to accommodate team
A	Allows for defense for a short period
N	Near a source of water
T	Tough terrain that impedes movement

When you have selected the site, first halt short of it, and set up a hasty ambush watching your own trail, to see if anyone has been following you. After waiting 10-15 minutes watching your trail, you will then send a two-person team to check out the patrol harbor.

When conducting this sweep, remember, while we want it small, it does need to be large enough to hold the whole team. We also need to check the site for any signs of recent human habitation. This is important for two reasons. First, humans are creatures of habit and if they used the site once, they are likely to return to it. Second, you don’t know what kind of field sanitation and hygiene practices they used and sleeping where others were unsafe is a sure way to get sick.

Use the Zig-Zag method to check the site, with one person doing the sweep and the other remaining at the 6 o’clock position as security overwatch. Beginning at 6 o’clock, the sweeping person moves to 8, then 2, then 10,

then 4, before returning to 6. This is a more thorough search pattern than we covered in TW-02 Fieldcraft.



Once the site has been declared clear, the team leader has the team occupy the site, assigning each element (whether by 2-person or 4- person teams, depending on size) a sector to occupy. The entire perimeter must be covered.

Once on the site, lay out your personnel in a triangle, giving you essentially three linear ambushes facing outboard. This way, you can defend in any direction.

Once the team is placed, conduct a 10-15 minute SLLS (Stop-Look-Listen-Smell), with everyone prone still wearing their packs. This is again to make

sure that no one follows you onto your patrol harbor and strikes while you are occupied setting up the site.

After the SLLS, one person on each side is sent out from the left end of each side to sweep the area in front of them. This sweep is about 100 meters out. This is to ensure that no one else has the same idea as you in the immediate area. Once they walk their side, they re-enter the site at the right limit of their side of the triangle and walk back to their position.

Only after all these security precautions have been taken can you begin setting up for the night (or day).

The sequence of tasks to be performed in a patrol harbor is, in this order:

1. Set up hasty firing positions, such as a Skirmishers Trench/Ranger Scrape.
2. Weapons maintenance.
3. Water Re-Supply.
4. Eating (if you didn't before stopping for the night).
5. Personal Hygiene.
6. Rest.

Remember that for 30 minutes before and after both sunset and sunrise, the entire team must "stand-to", meaning be awake and, in their position, facing outboard, maintaining security.

When setting up shelters and sleeping gear, remember that this isn't a 5-star hotel stay and we aren't "camping". Usually, just a sleeping bag and maybe a tarp is sufficient. We are trying to remain as low-profile and undetectable as we can be.

While in the patrol harbor, packs can be taken off, but should remain within arm's length. Packs make good pillows. However, for security and noise-discipline reasons, never take a pack off while standing, because it may slip and fall, making noise. Always take it off either while kneeling or sitting. I keep a strong carabiner on my top carry handle so that I can either run a line to hang it from or I can clip it onto a convenient branch to keep it off the wet or damp ground.

Rifles should never be leaned against trees or bushes. If it is not in your hands or your lap, lay it on the ground on your firing side, less than an arm's length away.

Belt kits and chest rigs should still be worn, but you can loosen them for comfort. Sleeping is the only time you should take them off. Again, they should be nearby, with the straps up so that you can put it on quickly.

As soon as the team gets into position, the leader selects two emergency rally points for the night, in opposite directions, and shares them with the team. The reason for this is that if a hostile party happens across your site, you can quickly move out to the emergency rally point without waiting for others or orders, just go. Having them in opposite directions gives you an option to move away no matter which side the hostiles come from.

Throughout the stay, 1/3 of your team must remain on security duty. Rotate this duty so that everyone gets some rest and gets to eat.

Remember that for field hygiene purposes, no one uses the bathroom inside the site. Two people must go out together. Even then, even when urinating, dig a small hole (you can just use your boot heel) to urinate into and then cover it up. Urine is like giant shining beacon for tracking dogs, should you need to avoid them.

Discourage anyone from undressing to sleep. Remember, we're not talking about our permanent bug out location here, we're talking about sleeping in an unsecured area. We need to be able to get up and take action as quickly as possible.

Shelters and sleeping gear are only set up at the last possible moment and are taken down as early as possible, to make it easier to leave should we need to.

While in the patrol harbor, only essential items are taken out of your pack and are returned to it as soon as you are finished with the item. For this reason, I recommend keeping your cooking and eating gear near the top of your pack, along with hygiene gear. They're used most often. In my full ruck, I actually have them in outside sustainment pouches, one for food, the other for hygiene and weapons cleaning gear.

Never lean against trees or bushes while sitting in the harbor. Any small movement you make might be relayed to the tree or bush, and it can be seen a long way off.

While inside the site, and while patrolling in general for that matter, team members should keep their intra-team UHF radios on the lowest power setting, so that you can communicate with each other, but not broadcast for miles.

Never make long-distance radio communications from inside the patrol harbor, unless it's an absolute emergency. The communications person, along with someone for security, should leave the site and travel 250-300 meters away to make radio contact for longer-range communications.

Having said this, setting up your radio and camouflaging its antenna should be one of your first tasks. You may need to call for help or answer someone else's call for help.

Another good tool to use in the patrol harbor or while patrolling in general, for the communications person, is a radio scanner with a "close call" type function and an earpiece. These radios sweep for ANY radio activity near you and tune into it. This can help you detect anyone following you or approaching your area. These have relatively short range, so hearing ANY traffic would alert you to an immediate threat.

Before leaving, once again send out one person from each side to do a sweep 100 meters out, to make sure that no one crept up on your patrol harbor during the night. After that is done, make sure that everyone re-camouflages the area to hide any sign that your team was there and make sure that nothing is left behind. If you have to bury any trash (you should carry it away with you), bury it under where you slept, since a tracking dog would react there anyway.

Once you have sterilized and swept the area, move out carefully. The first 250-350 meters is the most dangerous, because if someone found your site, they will set up an ambush relatively close to it.

If you decide to take a full day to rest, get up and move out to a new location around mid-day anyway, even if only moving a short distance. Remaining in one location too long increases your risk and it also builds complacency.

Training Standard

- Define what a patrol harbor is.
- List what each letter of BLISS means.
- List what each letter of COOLANT means.
- Demonstrate a zig-zag site sweep.
- List the security measures taken to ensure that a patrol isn't followed while setting up a patrol harbor.
- List in order the tasks performed in a patrol harbor.
- Explain the radio security procedures while in a patrol harbor.
- Describe the steps taken when leaving a patrol harbor.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 10

Observation Posts

"I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest," Isaiah 62:6

No matter what type of patrol we are running, whether a point recon, a zone recon, an ambush, or a raid, there will be a point in which an observation post, or a vantage point, will be needed to gather information.

We've discussed them in previous volumes from a security observation post standpoint, but in here we will go more in depth and describe them from an information gathering standpoint. Observation posts are a great way to find what specifically is happening in a particular location, whether in response to information received or as a part of planning your operation in the case of a raid or ambush.

Let's give a few examples here of how we might use an observation post/vantage point in a WROL situation.

1. You receive multiple reports of someone running a roadblock on a highway 5 miles east of your farm compound. The reports are unclear as to whether or not robberies are happening. You decide to set up an observation post to observe activity at the location.
2. While working the fields, you and your team see black smoke rising from a particular spot in the distance. After an hour, the smoke stops, but you know there is a house there. An area recon of the location would involve setting up several OPs to check the location and determine what happened.
3. During a zone recon, one of your patrols found a site that is obviously being used regularly for a camp. An OP and surveillance over the site would help you determine who is using it and for what purpose.
4. You know that you need to deal with the group of bandits operating from a nearby farm. You know that they must use one of two roads to leave the farm and head out. Setting up OPs on those roads will help you decide where to set up your ambush, and an OP watching the farm will let you learn the

strength and security procedures for the raid you have planned just after the ambush.

As these vignettes illustrate, there are a lot of reasons to need to know how to set up and run observation posts. Before this book, we've only ever discussed them in terms of defensive operations. The observation posts/vantage points needed for Scouting and Patrolling Operations are a bit more advanced and require more skill. The good news is that learning these more advanced skills will improve your defensive OP's as well.

First, let's discuss the difference between an observation post and a vantage point. A vantage point (VP) is a very temporary position using only what cover is naturally available. An observation post (OP) is a prepared position for longer term occupation.

For OPs, there are 3 basic types:

1. Open: Essentially just a Skirmisher's Trench or scrape, where you dig out just enough dirt to lay in and establish a small berm in front. A camouflage net or cover (ghillie blanket – see below) can be laid over the open OP for camouflage, but it must match the local terrain. These are the fastest and easiest to put in place.
2. Closed: This is an OP with solid overhead cover. It can be dug out or built up with natural material. It's built just big enough to sit down in, unless the terrain naturally affords enough cover to stand. These offer better concealment and weather protection. These take 2-3 hours to build.
3. Underground: Underground OPs are fully enclosed like a fighting position, but fully camouflaged with only a small slit to observe out and a camouflaged entrance/exit. Rather than a large opening that a fighting position has, this has just a small slit – anything else risks detection. These can take 12 hours to complete, and you have to find somewhere to hide all of the dirt and fill it in after leaving. They offer excellent security and weather protection but are hard to build.

For our purposes, as civilians in a WROL society, rather than a military force engaging in major operations, we will most likely use only open and closed OPs, but we will learn all three. You never know, you might need to resist that hypothetical Chinese invasion (or something).

OP/VP Gear

Before discussing how to set these up, it's important to know what types of gear will be needed for your OP/VP missions. These are non-negotiable. I keep a "observation kit" bag stocked with just these items, usually each in their own pouches, so that I can just grab them and go.

- Binoculars: I always take a least two sets, one higher powered (16x) and one lower powered (8x-10x). One is for near observations, the other far. Remember that when talking binoculars, the second number is vital too; the larger the number, the more light they gather allowing you to use them to improve night vision.
- Spotting Scope: Here you need to invest in high quality. I have an old school straight one that has served me well over the years and I wouldn't trade it for a brand new one for anything. It's old and heavy, but essentially unbreakable. Any spotting scope needs to have a tripod; it's non-negotiable. When viewing at high magnification at long distance, you can't hold it steady enough. My old one has iron sights on top so that I can roughly aim it, then use the scope to zoom.
- Shades/Mesh: You need sunshades fitted to your optics or a "sniper veil" type mesh to place over the lenses of your optics so that they don't reflect light. Light reflection is one of the most common ways in which OP/VP positions are compromises.
- Communications: The OP/VP team needs a radio to communicate back to the rest of the patrol in the patrol harbor or hide site. It is preferable to have a directional antenna on the radio. With a directional antenna (Yagi), you can point the antenna back at the rest of the patrol and broadcast mostly in their direction. This will reduce the chances of anyone else detecting your transmissions. UHF directional antennas are small enough to be easily packed. You can find pre-made VHF directional antennas along railroad tracks during a WROL situation; they use them as extenders along the rail line.
- Night Optics: These should only ever be used in the passive mode. In other words, don't ever turn on the IR

illuminator. If you do, it acts like a beacon for anyone else with night vision. The best use of it is to see if others are using active night vison; it will look light a flashlight beam in your night optics. You can also detect security cameras this way, as they generally use IR illuminators at night.

- Spare Batteries: Even if you aren't planning on being in the OP for more than a couple of hours, always bring enough batteries for a couple of days. There are plastic battery storage solutions made for tactical environments that you can just toss in your bag. Don't forget radio batteries – I usually store these in a waterproof pouch or Zip-Lock bag.
- Camouflage Nets: You can attach a camouflage net to the outside of your ruck, using it to camouflage you ruck until you need it. I keep either 550 cord or bungee cords attached along all 4 sides to enable me to set it up quickly and securely in the field. Make sure though that the camouflage net matches the environment you are in. Desert does you no good in the woods and vice-versa.
- Ghillie Blanket: Rather than carry bulky Ghillie suits, I recommend you make a Ghillie Blanket. Basically, you attach strips of burlap (I use hunting blind camo burlap) to a section of fishnet. This acts just like a camouflage net. To match it to the area's colors, simply put it on the ground and stomp on it. Dust and dirt from the area will color the blanket and you can unroll it over your open OP. The open net nature will also allow you to attach local foliage to it.
- Entrenching tool: I know it's become less favorable in the GWOT to carry an e-tool because we've gotten accustomed to rolling around in vehicles and operating from FOBs in a counter-insurgency role, but for OP/VP missions, you need to carry an e-tool either in or on your ruck. I use a longer-handled e-tool than a standard US one, because it has several other tool attachment heads (saw/knife/spear) that might be useful.

- Pruning Shears: These are great for cutting small branches out of your field of view. A small pair (Gerber makes one) for hunting use is perfect. These usually come with their own small pouch as well.

Site Selection

I know how much we like cool guy sounding acronyms, so the US military has developed one for selecting a site for an observation post. Similar to BLISS, we use "BLUES" to locate a good spot for an OP/VP:

B	Blends in with the surrounding area.
L	Low construction.
U	Unexpected location from hostile standpoint.
E	Emergency evacuation routes.
S	Silhouettes (avoid them).

Make sure that the entrance/exit from the OP/VP is away from the side in which the hostile party is located or expected. Try to have covered and concealed routes back to the patrol harbor site.

A note about that – An OP/VP should be manned by 2-3 people (3 is best). Everyone else remains at a patrol harbor site. You can rotate the OP team out (dusk and dawn are the best times to do this) but never put more than 3 people in the OP at one time.

The best staffing is 3 people, because one person can watch, one record, and the third rest. Positions should be rotated every 30 minutes, because human observation drops off significantly at 30 minutes.

Occupying the OP/VP

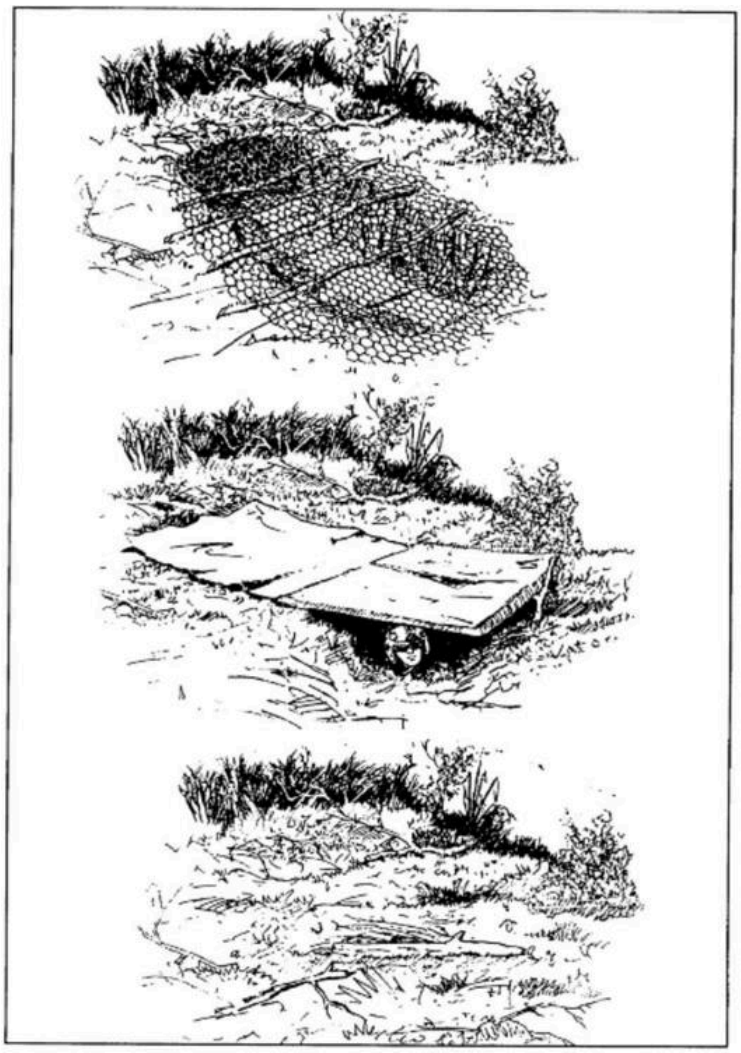
When first arriving at an OP/VP location, the 2–3-person team stops and conducts an SLLS (Stop-Look-Listen-Smell) for at least 20 minutes before moving onto the site. This is to make sure that no one else is occupying or passing the site. We do this for 20 minutes because most modern military units have a doctrine of 10-15 minutes. By adding an extra 5 minutes, we might see another team getting up from their SLLS that we might have otherwise bumped into. For you other veterans reading this, there is a reason why Military Police are very good at counter-reconnaissance, and this little 5-minute extra pause is why.

Once you've moved onto the site, before beginning to build it, conduct a radio check back to the patrol harbor. If you can't make radio

communications with them at low to mid power, pick a new OP/VP site. We don't ever want to transmit at high power from an OP/VP.
I know that some veterans will swear by using wire for communications, but the equipment is getting hard to find. If you have 2 field phones and wire, then I would highly recommend running wire from the OP to the patrol harbor, but it's another thing to risk being detected. If you don't have field phones and wire, don't sweat it, just use radio at low power.

Open Site Construction

An open site is nothing more than scraping away 12-18 inches of dirt for you or your team to lay in and using that dirt to build a berm around your position. Make it big enough to hold your ruck or rucks as well.
I know that a lot of Western military doctrine says leave your rucks in the ORP or patrol harbor, but I recommend taking it with you for an OP mission. In a WROL situation, or in combat in general, your ruck is your life, so it should always be within arm's reach. If you have a system like the ILBE (my choice), you can detach the assault pack to take with you and leave the full-sized ruck back in the patrol harbor or ORP site.
Once the site is dug, apply camouflage to the front and sides, and then cover it with your camouflage net or Ghillie blanket. I recommend layering a poncho under the outer camouflaging, because rain will increase the suck factor. Alternatively, you could use a thermal tarp between the layers for protection from thermal imaging, especially on cold days.
You can use sticks to support the camouflage layer above you, which will also prevent it from moving every time you shift.
Add local camouflage to the top layer to finish.



Closed Site Construction

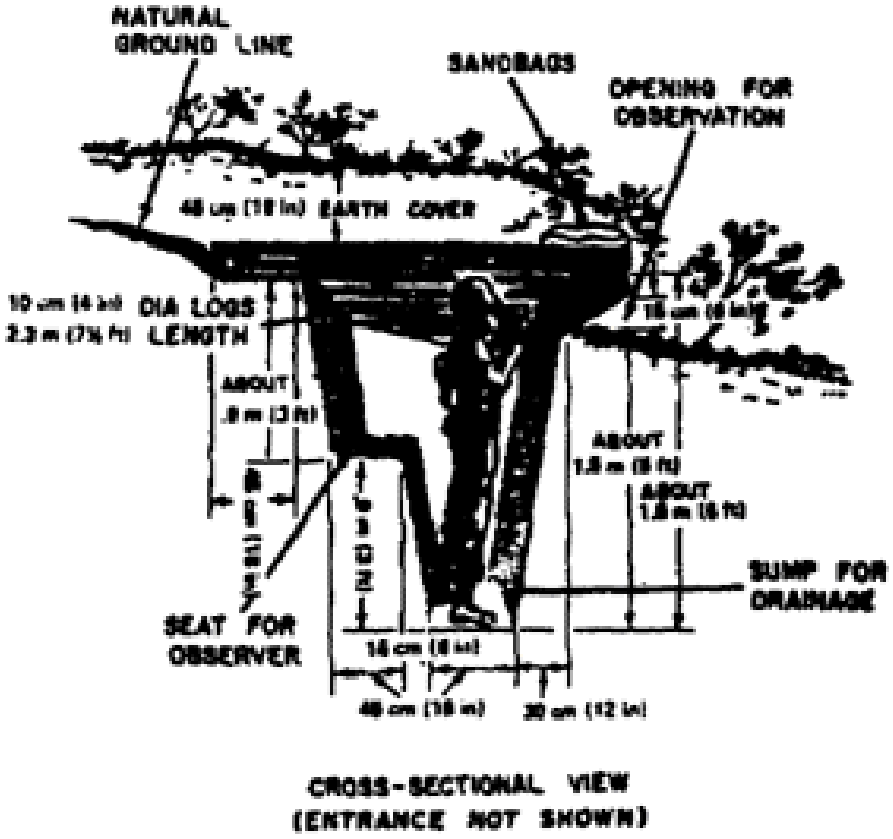
Construction of the closed site begin the same, only you will dig it 2 to 3 feet deep, and the build up a larger berm, camouflaging it with local branches. Think like a ground blind for hunting, only a much lower profile and using only natural materials. The base of coniferous trees good for this, with the low hanging branches camouflaging the position.

The difference is camouflaging the site all the way around with only small viewing slits. The site is the same, just deep enough for personnel to sit, rather than laying down in the prone position.

Underground Site Construction

This one requires much more time and effort. This one takes over 12 hours and it is hard to conceal the building process. You are essentially building

an underground bunker.
While it is the most secure, there are risks. It will attract all kinds of subterranean creatures like rats, snakes, and spiders. Water will seep in after even a mild rain. Smells (yes, all of them) will be trapped underground with you.
Dig out a large hole, deep enough for the team members to stand in, setting the dirt aside. Use logs to build overhead cover, and then place at least 18 inches of the soil on top of the logs. It's a good idea to run a couple of logs the opposite way as cross-members, because 18 inches of dirt is HEAVY. You can put more of the dirt on top but understand that that adds weight. Cut out a small viewing slit on the side facing the objective. Its not a bad idea to put on one the side facing the exit as well, so you can look out before leaving.
You can reinforce the corners inside with logs as well.
When cutting trees to use, make sure that you camouflage the fresh cut stumps with dirt and debris. Also, make sure you don't cut or move too many logs from one area.
You will need to hide or spread around the excess dirt from the OP construction.
The last step is to apply local camouflage to the top and sides of the underground site. Remember that this will have to be replaced at least once a day.



One Idea

We're not building a permanent base, just a temporary hidden site.

How OP/VP Sites Are Compromised

There are a number of ways in which OPs are detected. By following the BLUES acronym and remembering to avoid natural lines of drift, you can vastly reduce the risk of accidental discovery by locals or an opposing patrol.

The next area is shine. We already discussed reducing shine by shading the lenses of your optics. Here, a "trench periscope" can help as well. It's a periscope that is adjustable in height that allows you to look without exposing your head but find one with a shaded top lens.

Neglecting to refresh camouflage is a way in which OP/P locations are found. After even a few hours, natural camouflage begins to wilt. Have a plan to refresh it regularly.

Movement will expose your location. Staffing should only be changed during periods of reduced visibility like nighttime or heavy rains. Limit movement inside the OP to bear minimums. Maintain a low profile; unless underground, never stand up.

Noise is the next area. Everything must be done quietly to avoid detection. Speak softly and limit noisy movement. Related to this is radio noise. Always use earpieces or headsets. Digital communications is even better. Using a digital radio with text message capability is good for routine messages, but your need to retain the ability for immediate voice communications in the event of an emergency. Also, if you aren't using directional antennas, antennas need to be camouflaged into the trees above. Light discipline is another concern. A lot of doctrine suggests that putting a poncho over your head is sufficient, but ponchos are thin. If you are going to use a poncho, still use only lower powered red or blue lights under a poncho.

The last area is smell. The biggest learnings we've had in both Vietnam and Afghanistan is that Western urban people smell differently than rural folks in the third world, which enables them to smell us. The same is true for our purposes. Most urban people are around a lot of smells that over time, selectively filter their ability to smell. You need to remember that virtually everything about modern urban life conceals the smell of a human being. When those things are gone, we'll be far more able to smell each other again. Hygiene, especially field hygiene, can prevent this from giving you away. Also, cooking smells can give you away, so plan your meals in an OP/VP to be eaten cold.

Reminder: Shadows move with the sun. You may have to adjust to the moving sun to remain concealed.

Gathering and Documenting Information

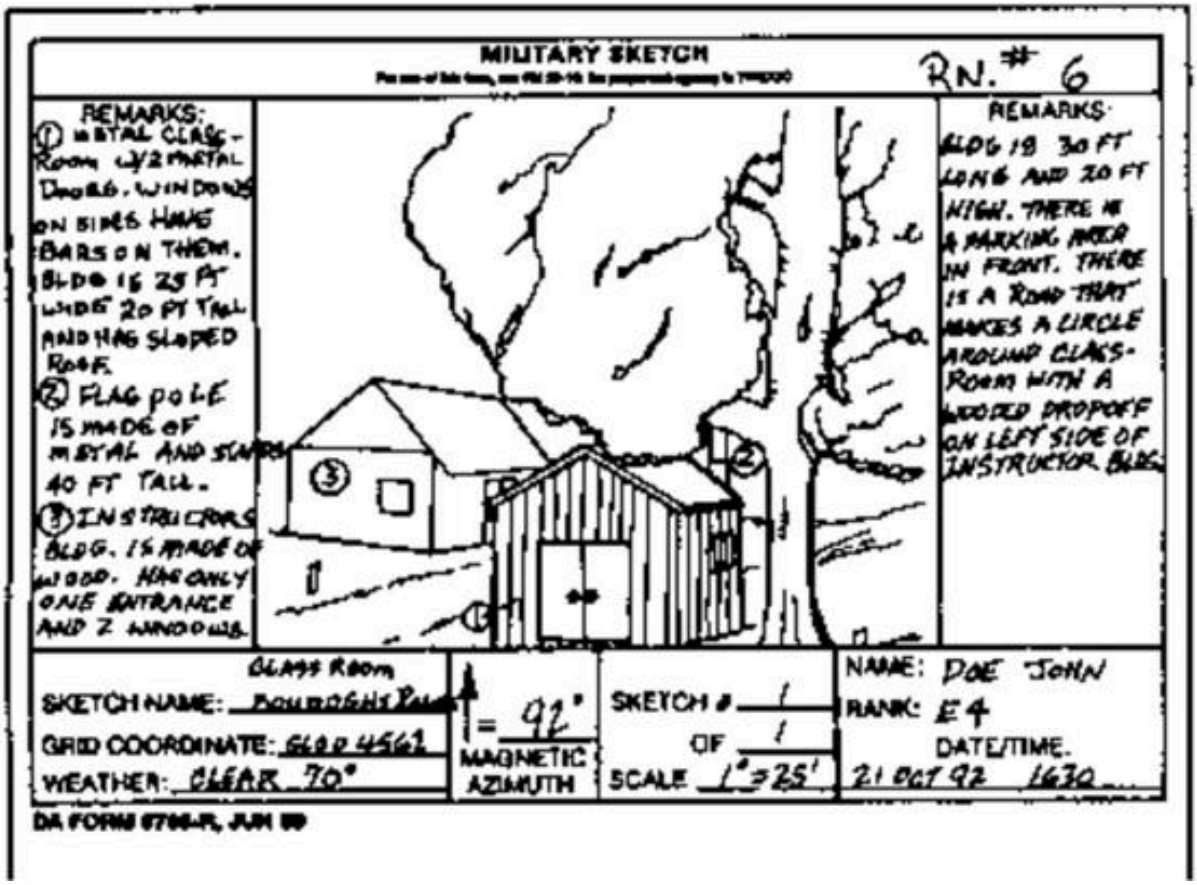
Remember why you are there: To gather information and report on the activities observed at the particular location. This requires us to properly gather and document that information.

As I always say, paper is an overlooked preparedness supply. Buy a good supply of Rite in the Rain or similar notebooks. Buy more than you think you'll need. Make sure you have the right kind of pens or pencils to write on them.

Notes should be taken of all activity observed in some type of a log. Document everything, because you don't know what might be important until much later.

Develop skill at creating a sketch of what you can see from the OP. Have more than one person make a sketch, because we all see different things.

Detailed sketches can be used to plan further operations or understand the observations better.



Military Sketch

Source: US Army

Your observation kit should include an all-weather notebook, and pens/pencils for making notes and sketches.

Once back at your patrol harbor, all the information is shared with everyone on the patrol before moving out to return to your secure location, in case everyone gets separated. The information is the most important asset.

Positioning the Patrol Harbor/Hide Site

The patrol harbor should be positioned at least one terrain feature away from the OP/VP location. It should have covered and concealed routes to and from the OP/VP. Yes, both. People leaving the OP/VP should use a different route than when they entered the OP/VP.

Training Standard

- Define what an observation post is.
- Describe the difference between an observation post and a vantage point.
- List the three types of observation posts.
- List the gear needed for an observation post mission.
- Explain what the acronym BLUES is used for and list what each letter means.
- Demonstrate construction of an open observation post.
- Demonstrate construction of a closed observation post.
- Demonstrate construction of an underground observation post.
- Describe at least 3 ways in which observation posts are compromised and how to mitigate them.
- List the methods to document the information gathered during an observation post mission.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 11

Drones

"You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."
Matthew 16:3b

Drones are a relatively new feature to the landscape. While they can be a great asset, they also present enormous risk when used by any opposition we might have, and they can present a security risk when we use them ourselves.

There are a lot of drones available, from $50-100 ones with limited range and standard video capabilities to ones ranging into the thousands of dollars. For own use, we would most commonly be using consumer drones around weighing around 249 grams, because above that level, they need to be registered with the FCC. Also, this smaller drone is able to fit in our gear and be portable. These generally have good range and high-quality video. When seeking one out, look for a drone with a range of 1-5 miles, that sends out good quality live video, rather than one that only stores the video on an SD card.

Anything larger than a sub-249g drone is too large to be transported around. We can use drones to get an overheard view of the area surrounding our home, bug out location, or really anywhere else. As we've mentioned before, drones are a SUPPLEMENT to Scouting and Patrolling, not a replacement. As we will see later in the chapter, drones are not all-seeing and can be defeated with a little discipline.

One issue for drones is battery life and having the ability to recharge them. You can recharge them from solar panels or a generator, but the problem is whether you can recharge them while on the move in the field. You can use small, man portable solar panels or battery banks, but these are added weight. These factors would tend to indicate that we would most likely only use drones at our fixed base location.

The security risk from drones is a bit more complex and may well outweigh their benefit. The first risk is that in the relative quiet of a WROL society, where you lose all vehicle noise, a drone can be heard from a long way off, indicating to others that humans are nearby somewhere.

The second risk is that anyone seeing or hearing a drone will know that someone with the ability to charge electronics is nearby. Having the

capability and excess power generation available would also indicate to them that you likely have food stores and other good things that they might want available. This makes you a target.

The final risk is that for the drone to be able to see people, people have to be able to see it. In other words, if you use your drone to locate a group walking through the woods a mile from your location, all they have to do to find you is to watch the drone. Given the short time that commercial drones can actually stay aloft for (less than an hour), extensive evasive actions generally aren't taken. If someone watches the drone, it will lead them back to you.

Also, you run the risk of someone taking kinetic action like we describe below against your drone, rendering it useless. This makes a drone in all honesty, more of a fixed based defense item used only when you know things are very bad locally.

Offensive Drone Use

On August 4th, 2018, opposition parties used two or three DJI M600 drones allegedly to attempt to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela. The M600 is much larger than what we discussed above. It had a 55-minute flight time and could carry up to 15 pounds. The drones involved in the attack each carried about 4 pounds of C4 explosives. The drones were used as suicide bombs, meaning the drone was intended to destroy itself.

Such suicide drone attacks have happened in all sorts of combat theaters in recent years.

In January of 2020, the Russian Khmeimim Air Base in Latakia, Syria detected a drone "swarm" attack in which three drones were attacking the base. The drones were large enough to be detected and destroyed by the bases air defense missile system.

Houthi rebels in Yemen regularly launch drone swarm attacks on Saudi oil facilities.

Drones, especially of the size required to use offensively carrying a large explosive payload, are too expensive for us to consider as a serious offensive capability. I just wanted to discuss the incidents so that you are aware of the risk. Never assume that a drone is just there to observe.

As a side note, we are seeing the Ukrainian Armed Forces make extensive use of modified commercial drones to drop either conventional hand grenades or improvised munitions on Russian forces with great success in

the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2022. This is a possibility if you have skilled engineers on your team.

Defensive Measures

We must have serious countermeasures against drones as a part of our plan. These include not only plans to defend our fixed locations, but also patrols and other groups on the move.

The best passive measures are route planning and dispersion. Route planning will involve keeping your routes under overhead cover, to reduce the chance of being detected by a drone. Dispersion involves having your personnel spread out enough that a drone will only see one or two people at a time, rather than your entire patrol.

Upon hearing a drone, the patrol should immediately disperse into the best available cover and concealment and then remain motionless. Resist the temptation to look up, because sunlight reflects brightly off human faces. Don't get up until the drone is out of the area. Remember the relatively short flight time. Keep in mind that a drone can be traveling in one direction, and its camera be looking in another direction. Wait until it is completely gone.

Seeing a drone take off or land means that a potentially hostile party is very close to you.

More active measures are limited in their effectiveness or availability.

You can try jamming the 2.4Ghz and 5.8Ghz radio bands that these operate in, but the equipment is cost prohibitive, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention that this is illegal (not a concern in a WROL situation). Jamming a drone will generally cause it to return to it's launch location or, in older or less advanced models, auto-land where it is when it loses the signal.

Counter-drones with nets is an option some police departments use, but you need extensive training and an extra drone just hanging around. You could also crash your drone into it, but then both drones are damaged and likely unusable.

Firing shotguns or rifles at drones can bring them down, but they hard targets to hit if they know they are being shot at. Again, shooting down drones is actually illegal in a non-WROL situation.

An effective countermeasure is to locate and target the drone operator.

Training Standard

- Explain what drones can be used for.
- Describe the features to look for in a drone.
- List the ways in which a drone can be used against you offensively.
- List passive drone defensive measures.
- Demonstrate the immediate action drill for seeing or hearing a drone.
- List some active drone defensive measures.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Chapter 12

Roger’s Rules for Ranging

“…then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head.”
Ezekiel 33:4

Scouting and patrolling is done to provide early warning of danger. In a WROL society, we need as much advanced warning as we can get.

At the outset of the book, we discussed General Vandegrift’s advice to return to the tactics of the French and Indian War. General Vandegrift was speaking specifically to the teachings of Major Robert Rogers, the leader of Rogers’ Rangers. This was a 600-man force that broke the template of traditional war among European powers by adopting the skills of the American Indian/First Nations people and applying them to modern warfare.

His teaching revolutionized warfare and are generally considered the first organized training in guerilla warfare in the Western World. These 28 principles were his foundation. They have been taught at the US Army Ranger School since the 1950s.

We present them here, as originally written and we will comment on modern context applications.

1. All Rangers are to be subject to the rules and articles of war; to appear at roll-call every evening, on their own parade, equipped, each with a Firelock, sixty rounds of powder and ball, and a hatchet, at which time an officer from each company is to inspect the same, to see they are in order, so as to be ready on any emergency to march at a minute's warning; and before they are dismissed, the necessary guards are to be drafted, and scouts for the next day appointed.

CONTEXT: Everyone should be fully armed and loaded out with full gear. The assignments and security posts for everyone should be discussed every morning. Be ready to move on short order at all times.

2. Whenever you are ordered out to the enemies forts or frontiers for discoveries, if your number be small, march in a single file, keeping at such a distance from each other as to prevent one shot from killing two men, sending one man, or more,

forward, and the like on each side, at the distance of twenty yards from the main body, if the ground you march over will admit of it, to give the signal to the officer of the approach of an enemy, and of their number,

CONTEXT: Use patrol formations and dispersion for safety & security and immediately report any sightings.

3. If you march over marshes or soft ground, change your position, and march abreast of each other to prevent the enemy from tracking you (as they would do if you marched in a single file) till you get over such ground, and then resume your former order, and march till it is quite dark before you encamp, which do, if possible, on a piece of ground which that may afford your sentries the advantage of seeing or hearing the enemy some considerable distance, keeping one half of your whole party awake alternately through the night.

CONTEXT: Select good sites for overnight sites and patrol harbors. Try not to leave evidence of your passing.

4. Sometime before you come to the place you would reconnoiter, make a stand, and send one or two men in whom you can confide, to look out the best ground for making your observations.

CONTEXT: This a leader’s recon, like we discussed earlier. A small party goes ahead and checks out the planned sites.

5. If you have the good fortune to take any prisoners, keep them separate, till they are examined, and in your return take a different route from that in which you went out, that you may the better discover any party in your rear, and have an opportunity, if their strength be superior to yours, to alter your course, or disperse, as circumstances may require.

CONTEXT: As we discussed earlier, check behind you often, and use a different route to return than when you went out. Keep prisoners separate.

6. If you march in a large body of three or four hundred, with a design to attack the enemy, divide your party into three columns, each headed by a proper officer, and let those columns march in single files, the columns to the right and left keeping at twenty yards distance or more from that of the

center, if the ground will admit, and let proper guards be kept in the front and rear, and suitable flanking parties at a due distance as before directed, with orders to halt on all eminences, to take a view of the surrounding ground, to prevent your being ambuscaded, and to notify the approach or retreat of the enemy, that proper dispositions may be made for attacking, defending, And if the enemy approach in your front on level ground, form a front of your three columns or main body with the advanced guard, keeping out your flanking parties, as if you were marching under the command of trusty officers, to prevent the enemy from pressing hard on either of your wings, or surrounding you, which is the usual method of the savages, if their number will admit of it, and be careful likewise to support and strengthen your rear-guard.

CONTEXT: All that fancy text just says maintain security all the way around your formation and to stop at key terrain to observe, making sure that you don’t walk into an ambush. Also, it warns to maintain a rear guard.

7. If you are obliged to receive the enemy's fire, fall, or squat down, till it is over; then rise and discharge at them. If their main body is equal to yours, extend yourselves occasionally; but if superior, be careful to support and strengthen your flanking parties, to make them equal to theirs, that if possible you may repulse them to their main body, in which case push upon them with the greatest resolution with equal force in each flank and in the center, observing to keep at a due distance from each other, and advance from tree to tree, with one half of the party before the other ten or twelve yards. If the enemy push upon you, let your front fire and fall down, and then let your rear advance thro' them and do the like, by which time those who before were in front will be ready to discharge again, and repeat the same alternately, as occasion shall require; by this means you will keep up such a constant fire, that the enemy will not be able easily to break your order, or gain your ground.

CONTEXT: This is a description of the fire and movement that we covered in Basic Squad Tactics. At the time, large armies used to

line up and face each other, and then take turns blasting away at each other. Rogers trained his people to never do that.

8. If you oblige the enemy to retreat, be careful, in your pursuit of them, to keep out your flanking parties, and prevent them from gaining eminences, or rising grounds, in which case they would perhaps be able to rally and repulse you in their turn.

CONTEXT: Don't pursue beyond your limit of advance, as we discussed earlier in the book, because then the opposition can divide you and counterattack smaller parties.

9. If you are obliged to retreat, let the front of your whole party fire and fall back, till the rear hath done the same, making for the best ground you can; by this means you will oblige the enemy to pursue you, if they do it at all, in the face of a constant fire.

CONTEXT: This is a description of the "Break Contact" drill we covered earlier. Half the party engages the opposition while the other half moves. Then switch.

10. If the enemy is so superior that you are in danger of being surrounded by them, let the whole body disperse, and every one take a different road to the place of rendezvous appointed for that evening, which must every morning be altered and fixed for the evening ensuing, in order to bring the whole party, or as many of them as possible, together, after any separation that may happen in the day; but if you should happen to be actually surrounded, form yourselves into a square, or if in the woods, a circle is best, and, if possible, make a stand till the darkness of the night favours your escape.

CONTEXT: This is using Rally Points. While moving, establish rally points. Every night, establish the emergency rally points for the night.

11. If your rear is attacked, the main body and flankers must face about to the right or left, as occasion shall require, and form themselves to oppose the enemy, as before directed; and the same method must be observed, if attacked in either of your flanks, by which means you will always make a rear of one of your flank-guards.

CONTEXT: Whenever contact is made with a hostile group, the entire patrol comes on line to suppress the opposition. Always appoint someone to watch the rear to prevent a surprise.

12. If you determine to rally after a retreat, in order to make a fresh stand against the enemy, by all means endeavor to do it on the most rising ground you come at, which will give you greatly the advantage in point of situation and enable you to repulse superior numbers.

CONTEXT: As discussed, rally points should be on the most defensible territory you can find.

13. In general, when pushed upon by the enemy, reserve your fire till they approach very near, which will then put them into the greatest surprise and consternation, and give you an opportunity of rushing upon them with your hatchets and cutlasses to the better advantage.

CONTEXT: If you can’t retreat, let them get close and, as the US Marine Corps squad mission says, “Repel his attack by fire and close combat”. Maintain personal weapons besides firearms, because firearms, being mechanical in nature, can fail. Your knife and tomahawk won’t.

14. When you encamp at night, fix your sentries in such a manner as not to be relieved from the main body till morning, profound secrecy and silence being often of the last importance in these cases. Each sentry therefore should consist of six men, two of whom must be constantly alert, and when relieved by their fellows, it should be done without noise; and in case those on duty see or hear anything, which alarms them, they are not to speak, but one of them is silently to retreat, and acquaint the commanding officer thereof, that proper dispositions may be made; and all occasional sentries should be fixed in like manner.

CONTEXT: Appoint security every night. Ensure that they know who is relieving them and when. Have a method for a silent alert.

15. At the first dawn of day, awake your whole detachment; that being the time when the savages choose to fall upon their enemies, you should by all means be in readiness to receive them.

CONTEXT: Establish a 100% security alert at dawn and dusk, as the dark ground and light sky make it harder to see.

16. If the enemy should be discovered by your detachments in the morning, and their numbers are superior to yours, and a victory doubtful, you should not attack them till the evening, as then they will not know your numbers, and if you are repulsed, your retreat will be favoured by the darkness of the night.

CONTEXT: Stealth is better than open movement. Remain hidden as much as you can be.

17. Before you leave your encampment, send out small parties to scout round it, to see if there be any appearance or track of an enemy that might have been near you during the night.

CONTEXT: We mentioned this in the patrol harbor chapter. Send out a party every morning to make sure that no one has approached you undetected in the night.

18. When you stop for refreshment, choose some spring or rivulet if you can, and dispose your party so as not to be surprised, posting proper guards and sentries at a due distance, and let a small party waylay the path you came in, lest the enemy should be pursuing.

CONTEXT: Choose locations near water. Remember that water draws humans, so post security when resupplying on water from a water source, since there is a greater risk of encountering other humans.

19. If, in your return, you have to cross rivers, avoid the usual fords as much as possible, lest the enemy should have discovered, and be there expecting you.

CONTEXT: Never cross a river in an expected place, like a bridge, that you don’t control. It’s a natural choke point and you’ll get ambushed there.

20. If you have to pass by lakes, keep at some distance from the edge of the water, lest, in case of an ambuscade or an attack from the enemy, when in that situation, your retreat should be cut off.

CONTEXT: Remember in the ambush chapter, when we talked about selecting terrain that limits the opposition from escaping?

This Rule for Ranging means don’t let yourselves be trapped by terrain features like lakes.

21. If the enemy pursue your rear, take a circle till you come to your own tracks, and there form an ambush to receive them, and give them the first fire.

CONTEXT: Know how to set up a Hasty Ambush when you know you’re being followed.

22. When you return from a scout, and come near our forts, avoid the usual roads, and avenues thereto, lest the enemy should have headed you, and lay in ambush to receive you, when almost exhausted with fatigues.

CONTEXT: Just as we are out scouting and patrolling, the opposition might be as well. Be especially cautious as you approach your own perimeter, in case the opposition has set an ambush along the approach to your secured location.

23. When you pursue any party that has been near our forts or encampments, follow not directly in their tracks, lest they should be discovered by their rear guards, who, at such a time, would be most alert; but endeavor, by a different route, to head and meet them in some narrow pass, or lay in ambush to receive them when and where they least expect it.

CONTEXT: When pursuing a hostile force, try to get ahead of them, rather than following directly. If you follow directly, they may ambush you. Your goal is to ambush them.

24. If you are to embark in canoes, battoes, or otherwise, by water, choose the evening for the time of your embarkation, as you will then have the whole night before you, to pass undiscovered by any parties of the enemy, on hills, or other places, which command a prospect of the lake or river you are upon.

CONTEXT: In riverine operations, you don’t have many places to take cover in a canoe or kayak, so nighttime is the best time to move by waterway.

25. In paddling or rowing, give orders that the boat or canoe next the stern most, wait for her, and the third for the second, and the fourth for the third, and so on, to prevent separation, and that you may be ready to assist each other on any emergency.

CONTEXT: This simply means that each boat watch for the boat behind them and keep them in sight, to keep the whole party together. When traveling at night, losing each other is a risk.

26. Appoint one man in each boat to look out for fires, on the adjacent shores, from the numbers and size of which you may form some judgment of the number that kindled them, and whether you are able to attack them or not.

CONTEXT: Fires mean people. More fires mean more people.

27. If you find the enemy encamped near the banks of a river or lake, which you imagine they will attempt to cross for their security upon being attacked, leave a detachment of your party on the opposite shore to receive them, while, with the remainder, you surprise them, having them between you and the lake or river.

CONTEXT: Set up an ambush on the opposite side of the river, if you think a hostile force may attempt to escape by crossing. The Rhodesian SAS was particularly adept at this.

28. If you cannot satisfy yourself as to the enemy's number and strength, from their fire, conceal your boats at some distance, and ascertain their number by a reconnoitering party, when they embark, or march, in the morning, marking the course they steer, when you may pursue, ambush, and attack them, or let them pass, as prudence shall direct you. In general, however, that you may not be discovered by the enemy upon the lakes and rivers at a great distance, it is safest to lay by, with your boats and party concealed all day, without noise or shew; and to pursue your intended route by night; and whether you go by land or water, give out parole and countersigns, in order to know one another in the dark, and likewise appoint a station every man to repair to, in case of any accident that may separate you.

CONTEXT: If you can’t determine the size of an opposing force, set up observation posts and gather information so that you can make sound tactical decisions. Sometimes, the best idea is to just let a larger party pass. This rule also covers having a challenge and countersign set up, and returning to the last rally point if separated.

These 28 “Rules for Ranging” established in 1757 from hard-won experience in the French and Indian War are every bit as applicable today as they were in 1757. Study them and learn from them.

Training Standard

- Be able to explain at least 10 of the Rules for Ranging in a modern context.

Tactical Wisdom

Scouting And Patrolling

Warrior Study: Gideon

You might think that scouting and patrolling are new ideas. They aren't. The exact same principles employed today, we employed 1200 years before Christ existed, or 3200 years ago. For that reason, we choose the illustrative story of Gideon as our Warrior Study for this volume, because just before he made his most important attack, he did some scouting. He also defeated a vastly superior force with a small but agile force. There is a lesson in there.

As a side note, I earlier mentioned Brigadier Orde Wingate as the founder of small unit tactics among Western militaries. In the early years of World War 2, Brigadier Wingate lead a small force of British soldiers and soldiers of the Jewish Hagenah against the Italians and Germans in North Africa. This force was called the Gideon Force, after Gideon of the Bible.

The story of Gideon is found in Judges 6-8.

At the time the story begins, the people of Israel had let themselves be led astray by worshipping things other than God, allowing all sort of depravity and evil acts to go on, culturally feeling that these things were OK and not evil or detestable. Does this sound familiar?

In response to this, God sent invaders and raiding bands to travel across Israel and caused famine and poverty. Again, I ask, does this sound familiar?

Gideon was a common man, born into a farming family. One day, while working on the threshing floor, an Angel of God appeared to Gideon and called him a "Mighty Warrior". During the first contact, Gideon did what we all do, he asked the Angel why God would let this happen.

"Pardon me, Lord", Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?"

Judges 6:13a

God's response to this is one I've been mentioning over on the Tactical Wisdom blog:

The Lord's Angel turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

Judges 6:14

You see, as my friend Don says all the time, we are waiting for a "big white knight on a big white horse with a big white lance" to magically intervene

and do the hard things for us, and that's just not going to happen. God is telling us (and Gideon) that we have to do it ourselves, and He will be there to help. But WE must do the work because WE want to fix it. This is a recurring theme in the Bible.

At this point, the Angel tells him that he is going to be a mighty warrior who leads his people out of the occupation of their oppressors. Gideon, just like Moses, David, Jonah, and so many others in the Bible, says "Nah, Fam, you've got the wrong guy. I'm just a nobody." The Angel again says he is going to lead an army.

At this point, Gideon must have been thinking "This guy is totally a Fed", because he tells the Angel that if he is really an Angel of the Lord, he'd give him a sign. The Angel then gives him two different signs.

At this point, God directs Gideon to begin a guerilla campaign. Yes, really. The first task is to put the oppressors on notice with a strike on an altar to the false god Baal. Gideon takes a small force and conducts a nighttime raid:

So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

Judges 6:27

The Tactical Wisdom here is that nighttime operations can provide security and reduce the chance of detection.

It's ironic that as I was writing this about Gideon destroying the altar to a false God in the night, in July of 2022, an unknown party destroyed the Georgia Guidestones during the night, using the cover of darkness to destroy an altar to a false god. Coincidence?

In response to this, the Midianites increased their forces and oppression in the area, so Gideon called people together to fight them and throw off the oppression.

Gideon moved his force towards the enemy force. He used some of our earlier site selection criteria:

Early in the morning, Gideon and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

Judges 7:1

He selected a site near a source of water resupply and halted his force one terrain feature (the hill of Moreh) away from the objective as his ORP.
Gideon was told by God that he had too many men, so the first thing Gideon did was to send those who were afraid away, which leads us to another Tactical Wisdom point.

"Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead'". So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

Judges 7:3

The struggles ahead require only the strong of will. We don't need tens of thousands of Twitter Warlords who are only brave behind the keyboard, and afraid when the smoke starts to roll in. It's not a fight for faint-hearted, whether we are talking about a WROL survival situation or resistance to growing world-wide tyranny. We need men & women of courage and conviction.
Now, they had sent away those who were afraid, but still wanted to winnow down the force to only the best warriors. In Judges 7:4-7, God gives Gideon a test to perform to determine who the most situationally aware ones are. Gideon had everyone drink from the water at the spring. Anyone who put their head down to the water, giving up their awareness, was sent home. Only the 300 men who scooped up water and drank it from cupped hands with their eyes up and scanning the area were chosen.
The Tactical Wisdom here is that while many may be willing to help, not everyone can be an ultra-tacticool Ranger ™. Assign only the most aware, willing, and trained people to kinetic roles. Everyone else can help with food production, construction, or communications. Have some sort of performance test, like Gideon did, to decide who gets to be a fighter among your group. The Training Standards at the end of every Tactical Wisdom chapter give you a great testing baseline.
In Judges 7:9-15, Gideon and one of his men go out before the raid to conduct a leader's recon, just like we described in the book. They approached the enemy camp to determine their strength and willingness to fight. During this, Gideon overheard the enemy soldiers talking about how afraid they were of "The Sword of Gideon".
The Tactical Wisdom here is first that a leader's recon is important. The second piece is that gathering and analyzing intelligence can help you realize that your enemy isn't as all-powerful as you might think, and that

you should adjust your plans based on the last-minute intelligence you received.

On larger-world scale, I would be remiss not to point out one more point. The oppressing power, despite appearing all-powerful and possessing every modern piece of war material in massive quantities, was secretly trembling in fear of the small minority fighting for their freedom against oppression. There is a lesson in there that is repeated in the Bible (and history) several times.

The story says that Gideon launched his raid during the third watch of the night, which would indicate between 3 and 5 AM. Traditionally, this is the point of the night in which human activity and awareness is at its lowest level, so that is some Tactical Wisdom to glean from this story.

Gideon used deception to make his force seem much larger than it actually was. To accomplish this, Gideon had men sneak around to all sides of the enemy camp. At the same moment, men all the way around the enemy camp blew trumpets and shouted “For the Lord and for Gideon!”, giving the impression that the enemy was surrounded completely by a large force. This caused the enemy to flee, and his smaller force was able to fight smaller, disjointed units, rather than one large force.

In the end, Gideon borrowed a page from this book to end the war:

Gideon went by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jobgehah and attacked the unsuspecting army.

Judges 8:11

That’s right; he bypassed their defenses, set up in the rear area, and then ambushed the opposition. That’s the Tactical Wisdom here.

Now, the story doesn’t end here.

While Gideon was pursuing the Midianites, he had asked a particular town for help. On his way back, he paid them a visit. Now, we're not drawing that part (revenge) as Tactical Wisdom, but this piece:

He caught a young man of Sukkoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Sukkoth, “the elders” of the town.

Judges 8:14

Conduct tactical questioning of people you encounter to gather the information you need to get a more complete picture. Gathering information should be an on-going process.

As you can see from the story of Gideon, the principles of scouting and patrolling are as old as humans. We've been using these tactics for as long as men have gone to war. Major Rogers and Brigadier Wingate may have written them down, but the principles existed even in Biblical times.
I hope this book helps you prepare.